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HISTORICAL WITNESS  
AGAINST  
THE CHURCH OF ROME,  
AND  
ITS COUNTERFEIT,



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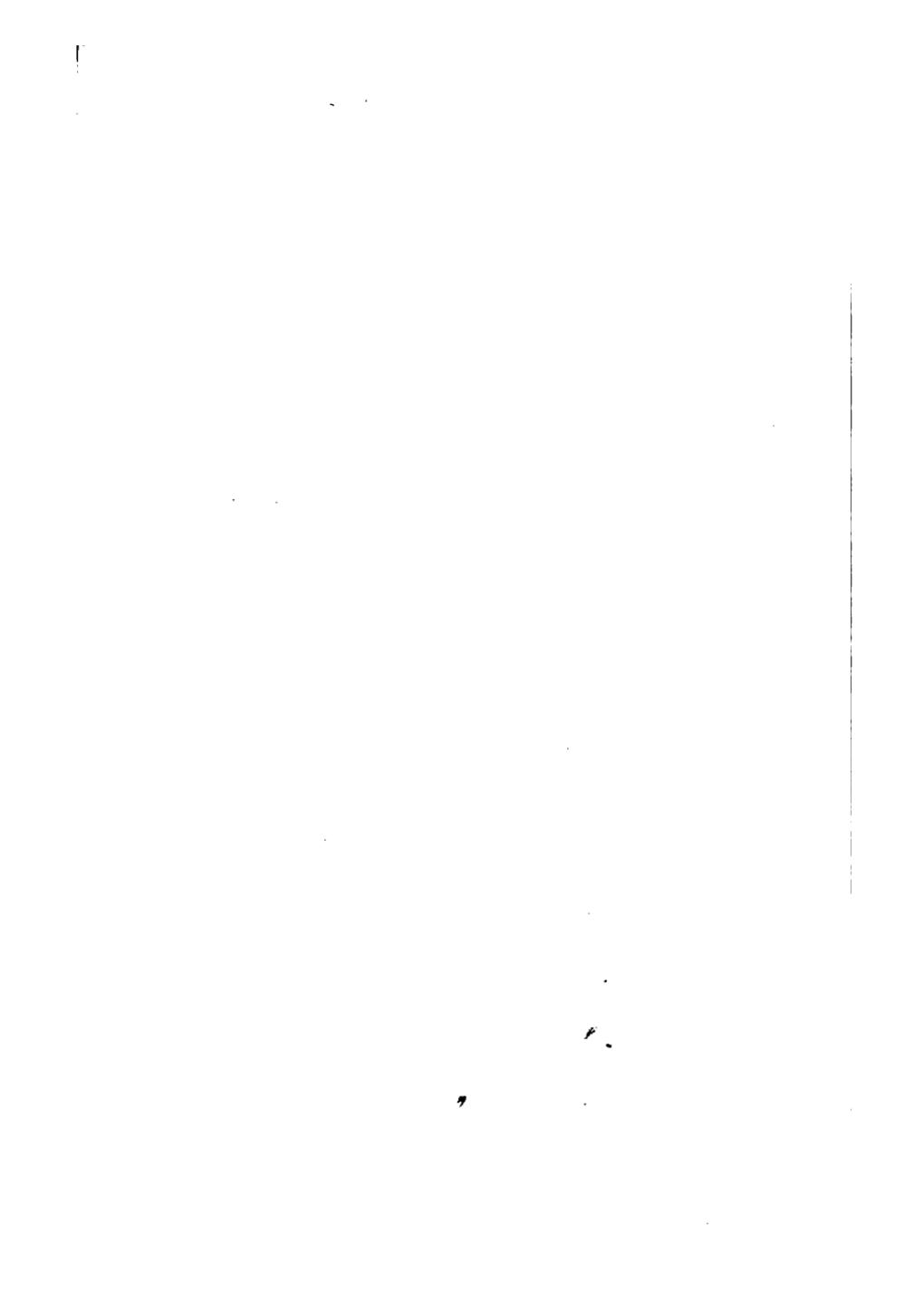




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HISTORICAL WITNESS  
AGAINST THE CHURCH OF ROME  
AND ITS COUNTERFEIT.

*k. 11.*

BY  
A WINCHESTER INCUMBENT.

"God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."  
—2 THESS. ii. 11.



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*110. k. 273.*



## INTRODUCTION.

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CAN it be thought possible, that, at the present epoch of our world's history in this nineteenth century of ours—the boasted age of human progress—of mental activity and freedom—and of an advancing civilisation—can it be thought possible, that we shall be persuaded to abandon all our cherished advantages, to return to the opinions and usages of the dark ages, and to prostrate the neck, like the men of other days, under the iron yoke of the Papal despotism? It is truly one of the most startling, and, at the same time, one of the most humiliating facts in the history of mankind, that a system of such unblushing and gigantic imposture as that of Romanism—based on the claim of the Bishop of Rome to be the Vicar of Christ, the Vicegerent of the Godhead on earth, the Sovereign and Supreme Pontiff—should have acquired so vast an ascendancy over so many millions of the human race, and to have endured for

so many ages of time. We can, indeed, imagine that, in earlier days, when the profoundest ignorance and the grossest superstition darkened the human mind, it may have been an easy thing for the more unscrupulous and ambitious Bishops of Rome, from their local advantages, as seated in the Empire City, to set up the claim of priority and supremacy, and gradually to build on this foundation all the fallacies and inventions included in Romanism. It is a fact, historically certain, and beyond all dispute and debate, that the Papacy of the middle ages was a power which took its rise by very slow and progressive stages, and from the most insignificant beginnings; but continued to gather strength and importance in the lapse of time, whether from the religious and ecclesiastical disputes and controversies, so early rife in the Church, or from the rivalry of contending Sees and Patriarchates, or from the political necessities and struggles of contending Princes. But what may well excite our amazement is,—after making full allowance for the favourable circumstances in which the earlier Roman Bishops were placed to raise their preposterous pretensions to universal dominancy,—that when the Church and the Pontiffs had sunk into the most glaring and fearful state of corruption, that the eyes of men should not have been opened, even in the darkest times, to have challenged the validity of those claims. To think only of the lives

and characters of most of the Popes of the middle ages—men like Boniface VIII., John XII., John XXIII., Alexander VI., and others—ostensibly the Vicars of Christ, successors of St Peter—given to the most profligate and dissolute habits, addicted to the lowest vices and the most flagrant crimes. And, as for the body of the clergy, with few exceptions, their condition was that of utter corruption and depravity—like birds of prey, greedy of seizing on the rich temporalities of the Church, and, at the same time, living totally regardless of their spiritual duties and offices. It is a repulsive picture to contemplate the profligacy, the Simony, and the unbounded rapacity of the clergy, whether of the regular or the secular orders. The whole of the Christian world, yea, Christianity itself—as it was exhibited—appeared to be overwhelmed by a dark cloud of heathenish superstition and shameless corruption. The Papal system had laid its mysterious spell on every faculty of the human mind, and on every effort of the human heart. It claimed unlimited obedience to the rules and ordinances of the Church, independent of the teaching of the Scriptures. It demanded of men absolute submission to its authority as of infallible guidance; as holding the keys of life and death, and not only of temporal, but likewise of eternal death. It guaranteed the former to all who submitted to its power and control, and it impiously assigned the

latter to all who refused to bow under its spiritual despotism and to join its communion.

Was it then indeed possible that the mind of man could really become so prostrate—losing so much of its powers of thought and reflection—well-nigh its rational character—as to be persuaded—considering the Papacy and the state of the Church in mediæval times—that the Bishop of Rome was the Representative of the Most High, the *Alter Ego* of the Son of God, on the earth, vested with infallibility, with unchallenged authority over every man's conscience, and entitled to all but divine homage—and, moreover, to believe that the Church of Rome was the only true Catholic, or Universal Church, the Mistress and Supreme Mother of all Churches, and out of whose pale or communion salvation was not possible and not attainable? And if it seems marvellous that, even in the worst and most benighted times, men should have been lured into the reception of such unwarranted and unwarrantable assumptions and pretensions like these—what are we to say, or think, when we find that the same fundamental falsehood, with all the errors built upon it, is still dominant and defiant in our own enlightened age?

But then we are told—and the saying has passed into general currency, and has received the sanction of an established fact—by statesmen and ecclesiastics, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, that the Papacy

in itself is no longer what it was in bygone days; that it has changed its spirit, its character, and its tone; and that, affected and influenced by modern civilisation, and by the principles of human progress, it has lowered and modified its ancient claims and pretensions, and is more in harmony with the temper of the times. This language is most frequently heard in our days from those who are called Liberals in politics and religion. But is it true? Is it borne out by facts and observation? Is it in the nature of the Papacy to change its character, and to become more liberal, more in harmony with modern civilisation? The Papal system is confessedly unchanged and unchangeable—*semper eadem*. Such, in fact, is the very foundation on which Romanism is built. It is through force alone that its savage intolerance and grinding despotism are held in check. But we can hardly discover, either in the language of the present Pope, or in that of his devout and faithful subjects, the least abatement in the arrogant and preposterous claims and pretensions of the Papacy of the middle ages. The very nature of the Papal system is antagonistic to the law of progress and improvement; its absorbing ambition, and its spirit of domination, are as much expressed and personified in the attitude and language of Pius IX. as in those of Gregory VII., the notorious Hildebrand. We need but refer, in proof of this, to the several Allocutions

addressed by the Pope to the Consistory—those of June 29th, September 20th, and December 20th, of last year—and we shall there find, amid an effusion of blessings and an abundant outpouring of curses, the old and familiar assumptions of “Tu es Petrus,”—“We sit in the chair of St Peter,” and “We are the Vicar of Christ,” and, of course, as such, infallible, and unchangeable, and unassailable; and consequently “non possumus,”—we can concede nothing, we can change nothing, and we can advance in nothing.

And we may be quite sure that such pious and zealous Roman Catholics as Cardinal Cullen and Dr Manning, and very many others that might be named—lay and clerical—in this country as well as in Ireland, would regard the allegation of a change in the Papal system, a modification of its supreme claims and pretensions, as a foul and blasphemous heresy. It is but a very little while since there has appeared in print a Romanist volume of Essays, edited by the titular Archbishop of Westminster, in which the following attributes and prerogatives of the Church of Rome are enunciated and contended for:—“The Church,” we are told in that volume, “is in possession of both swords—the spiritual and the temporal; and neither the Church nor the State have any cognisance of tolerance. According to the Divine law, every magistrate, whether spiritual or temporal, must in every respect take his stand on the principles of

religious intolerance. The Church claims the submission of the civil power. The civil magistrate must sit at the footstool of the Vicar of Christ; the power of exercising supreme temporal control over the nations is inherent in the Papacy."

Now, however such maxims and assertions may go to prove the utter imbecility, the silliness, of the parties who venture to advance them, they at the same time serve to prove what we would contend for—that in nature and spirit the Papal system is unchanged, and while it is allowed to exist, is unchangeable. All it wants is power, and again it would break out in acts of persecution, cruelty, and slaughter, as in days of old, and during the reign of the Inquisition. Unchain the tiger, and he will at once engage in his instinctive work of ferocity. We do the Romanist no wrong in saying this, while we have before us the volume from which extracts have been given. Suppose that the maxims which are set forth in the volume could be enforced, might we not expect to witness again scenes like that of St Bartholomew?

But although it is certain that the mediæval claims raised by Dr Manning and his colleagues in the volume of Essays can excite only a smile and a feeling of pity, on the other hand, it is equally certain that the Papacy has of late gathered considerable strength, and gained a great amount of influence. It



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corrupting the minds of many of its members. This undeniable fact has emboldened the Papacy, and encouraged it to believe that victory is within arm's length—that England, its most formidable foe, is already within its grasp, and ready to acknowledge its supremacy. And is there not in high quarters a movement of reunion with Rome? Reunion with the Church of Rome—which proscribes the Bible, which demands implicit subjection and obedience to the Pope, and whose distinctive characteristic is the daily sacrifice of the Mass,—while every clergyman of the Church of England, solemnly and *ex animo*, vows and engages that “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein should not be believed as any article of faith.” He vows and engages that “the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England,” and that “the sacrifice of the Mass, in the which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.” To conceive of a reunion of the two Churches—an amalgam of the thirty-nine articles with the decretals of the Council of Trent—is, to say the least, a piteous hallucination and decrepitude of mind.

Far better and more honest were it, on the part of those who put on the livery of the Church of Rome, and speak her language, if they openly joined her ranks.

In fact, the Church of Rome claims those men—the Ritualists, as they are called—as her own. “The men of this school”—so says Dr Manning, in the volume of Essays—“hold and teach, in a way, more or less nearer the truth, the doctrine of the Sacraments, their nature, number, and grace,—the intercession and invocation of saints,—the power <sup>of</sup> the priesthood in sacrifice and absolution, and the excellency and obligation of the religious life.” Moreover, the titular archbishop goes on to say, that “the latest and strongest phenomenon of the movement is the adoption of an elaborate ritual, with its vestments, borrowed from the Catholic Church.” The Ritualists, he declares, “are coming up to the very threshold of the Church; they have learned to lean upon it, as the centre of Christendom from which they sprung, and upon which their own Church is supposed to rest.”

When we consider, then, the extent to which the Popish element has been allowed to invade the Church of England, the progress it continues to make in defiance of the law, and of the spirit of the age, it is not surprising to find that the Romanists are full of exultation and of hope that England will, ere long, be reconciled to the Holy See, and return to her ancient allegiance to the Supreme Sovereign Pontiff.

We have no such apprehensions; we do not share

in the fear of the more timid members of our Church; there is sufficient strength, vitality, and soundness in the Church of England to maintain her Reformed character, and to cast out the foreign and corrupt element. One of the most lamentable features of the times is the part which the Dissenters, as a body, are taking to strengthen the hands of the Romanists. Although very loud in, and tenacious of, their profession of Protestantism, nevertheless they allow their political proclivities to override their Protestant convictions, to stimulate and to act with the Romanists, to trample on the Church Establishment—the great bulwark against the Papacy—both in this country, as well as in Ireland. Without speaking, in particular, of the agitation of the Liberation Society in England, we may simply mention that an agent was sent by that association to Ireland—a Mr Carvill Williams—to agitate and to exasperate the population of that country against the Irish Church. Truly a consistent work for “Protestants,” to be instrumental in giving more scope and freedom to the Church of Rome to carry out its objects and designs.

The *Times*, in a leading article of 11th of last January, commenting on the proceedings of a meeting held at St James’s Hall, under the presidency of Mr Miall, to advocate “the utter extinction of the Irish Church,” remarks, that while “Ultramontanes are writing against religious persecution—notorious

tuft-hunters are abusing the Irish aristocracy—Dissenters are for giving the Court of Rome all it asks for in this country. . . . The utter extinction of the Irish Church, which Mr Miall prays for, will not raise the condition, or alter the character, or soften the prejudices of a single native Catholic. . . . On the whole, we are disposed to think, that, if Mr Miall and his friends were to succeed, even to the extent of utter and universal disendowment, an extensive splitting up of the Irish landed proprietors, and the creation of a large class of national copyholders, and could live to see the result of a ten years' working, they would be surprised to find how little old grievances had been abated, how many new ones had sprung up, and how little Ireland had advanced towards the Nonconformist model."

Seeing, then, the active and unscrupulous agencies which, in our day, are at work around us to advance the designs and interests of the Church of Rome, it may not be out of date to examine briefly the very foundation on which the whole system is built and rests; and whether there be any warrant, entitled to the credit and respect of mankind, of the high-sounding claims and pretensions of the Bishops of Rome to be the Vicars of Christ on earth, the successors of the Apostle Peter, in virtue of which they are invested with temporal sovereignty, and universal spiritual power.

We do not pretend to produce, in our inquiry, that which is original ; this were scarcely possible, for the subject has been handled and discussed for ages past by the most learned men of different countries, and Barrow alone may be said to have exhausted the question. All we aim at is, to put together, in a concise form, such historical data as may help to quicken the mind of some, who, in our liberal age, seem to overlook, or to palliate, the delinquencies of the Church of Rome. If it might be thought that we use occasionally strong expressions, it is simply with the desire, not to give offence, but to call things by their proper name.

## THE CHURCH OF ROME.

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IT is truly surprising to think on what flimsy and slender ground the whole colossal fabric of the Papacy is built—a fact which must ever remain one of the most startling points in the annals of humankind. The Popish theory is, that the Author of Christianity has vested in the person of St Peter sovereignty and power over the whole body of the Christian Church ; that these prerogatives are transferred and handed down to all the Bishops of Rome, as lineal successors of that Apostle ; and that, in virtue of that office, the Pontiff, the head of the universal church, is possessed of supreme authority over all Bishops, pastors, and professing Christians in every section of the earth. Moreover, the plea of infallibility is put forth in behalf of the Pope, that, as the Vicar of Christ on the earth, his judgment on all points of Christian dogma, and whatsoever concerns the interests of the Church, is to be regarded as unerring and indefectible. These overweening pretensions have, we must allow, been variously modified, and stated in terms more or less arrogant, as suited

the circumstances and spirit of the times in which they were set up. But it is worth while to notice the audacity and even blasphemy of those claims as originally put forth, and never formally renounced. "Gregory VII," we are told by the learned and elegant historian of Italy, during the middle ages,\* "formed the plan of ecclesiastical despotism, and made known its principles: a collection of his maxims, entitled *Dictatus Papæ*, has been preserved to us in the page of history; and it is astonishing to observe by it how far priestly tyranny had dared to raise the mask. There is, it is said, but one name in the world, that of the Pope; he alone is worthy of the Imperial diadem, and princes should kiss his feet. He alone can appoint or depose Bishops, assemble, preside at, and dissolve Councils: no one can judge him, since he is a Saint, by virtue of his election. He has never erred, nor shall he ever err. He can depose princes, and absolve their subjects from their allegiance." To establish and enforce the authority of this Pontifical claim, Gregory published it, in a Council held at Rome in the year 1075. Furthermore, the Decretals, the authorised version of Romish theology, declare, "That if the Pope should send souls in crowds to the Prince of Hell, still no blame could attach to His Holiness, seeing that no man can judge him."† To the fore-

\* *Histoire des Republiques Italiennes du moyen age*, par Sismondi, tom. i. chap. 3, p. 195.

† *Basnage, Histoire*, tom. ii. p. 1590.

going we may add, what the General Council of the Lateran, under Leo X., declared of that semi-infidel Pope, "To thee is given all manner of power, above all powers, heavenly or earthly; he who saith all excepteth nothing." And again we are told, by a zealous champion of the Papacy and the Romish faith,\* that "the Pope, although he may err by personal error in his own private judgment, as a man and as a particular doctor, in his own opinion—as the successor of St Peter, as the Vicar of Christ upon earth, as the Shepherd of the universal Church, in public judgment, in deliberation, or definitive sentence, never erreth, nor ever erred, nor ever can err." Another writer goes the length of asserting, that "Christ and the Pope make one Consistory, and keep one Court; and, sin only excepted, the Pope can do in a manner all things that God can do."† And, finally, it was maintained by the Jesuits, in a public disputation in Paris, that "Jesus Christ has granted to St Peter and his successors, as often as they speak *ex cathedra*, the same infallibility which He had Himself; therefore, there is in the Roman Church an infallible judge of controversies, even excluding a General Council, as well in questions of right as those of fact."‡

Now, when the Romanists advance such claims in

\* Harding's Confutation of Bishop Jewel's Apology, quoted by the Bishop in his defence.

† Panomitan de Electione.

‡ Dupin, Eccl. Hist., vol. xvi. p. 147.

behalf of the Pope and their Church, we might fairly expect that they would produce and establish on plain, intelligent, and indisputable grounds the validity of those claims. The only legitimate proof on which to rest so lofty a claim, can be fetched only from the explicit declarations of the New Testament. It can hardly be imagined, without some unaccountable delusion, that the Saviour of mankind would have conferred, in perpetuity, so vast and unlimited a power on the Bishops of Rome, as His vicars and representatives upon earth, without a direct and unmistakable announcement, different from that contained in the sixteenth chapter of St Matthew's Gospel, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses—a few brief sentences, on which the whole machinery of Popery is invented and set in action. Is it credible at all—is it in consonance with all we know, from the Bible, of God's dealings—that an authority like that claimed by the Bishops of Rome should be delegated by the Most High, to any human being, without a strict and positive indication known and read of all men? One thing is certain, and placed beyond all question or debate, namely, that the Apostle Peter himself never laid the most distant claim to the honours and prerogatives to which his pretended successors aspire. Neither in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in the two epistles written by St Peter, can we discover so much as even a hint in support of the preposterous pretensions of the See of Rome. If the Popes demand from all that approach

their persons, whether sovereigns or subjects, to prostrate themselves in the lowliest and most humiliating attitude, and to engage in an act of almost divine homage—"Peter," we read, "when Cornelius fell down at his feet and worshipped him, took him up, saying, Stand up, I myself also am a man"—we may justly assume, that this occasion would have been the most fitting for St Peter, that, if conscious of the dignity, and while declining the act of worship, he would have said not only "I myself also am a man," but would have advanced something also indicative of the priority and supremacy above the rest of the apostles claimed on his behalf by the Romanists. But we are in possession of direct historical and scriptural testimony to show—and which no candid Romanist can evade or set aside—that the authority ascribed to St Peter is utterly groundless and fictitious; that he was neither the "Prince of the Apostles," nor was Rome "the Mother and Mistress of all the Churches." If priority or supremacy is to be assigned to one of the Apostles in preference to the others, it must necessarily be given to St James, who, as the first Bishop of Jerusalem, presided over the first Christian Council that was held to decide the disputed question which had arisen touching the observance of the Jewish rites, as recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts. St Paul and Barnabas, being unable to allay the dissension, referred the matter to the adjudication of the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem, but not to St Peter as the alleged Pri-

mate and supreme Head of the Church. That apostle, in common with others, "rose up" to deliver his opinion on the question before the Council; but it was left to St James, the presiding Bishop, to pronounce the judgment. "Wherefore," he said, "my sentence is;" or, as St Chrysostom says, "I authoritatively declare that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God." And accordingly it was determined, on the proposal of St James, to send decretal letters to the Gentile churches, to abide by the decision of the Jerusalem Council. On what plea, then, can it possibly be maintained, that primacy and supremacy were vested in the person of St Peter? were it so, he would naturally have occupied that position, and not St James, in that assembly of the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem. It is a fact which history incontestably proves and establishes, that the early Fathers of the Church, during the three first centuries of the Christian era, speak in equal terms of all the Apostles, without the least mention of Peter as possessing any superiority over his brethren. If here and there any pre-eminence is given to St Peter, it is when he and St Paul are jointly spoken of. St Cyril, in making mention of the two Apostles, designates them as "the Patrons and the Presidents of the Church." St Augustine styles them "the Princes of the Churches." The two Popes Agatha and Adrian call them "the ringleading Apostles." On the other hand, another Pope, Gregory I., speaks of St Paul alone, as "the Head of the nations, because

he obtained the Principate of the whole Church." Is it too much, then, to say, that the whole Romish scheme is a fiction and a gross imposture? For even, if it were granted for argument sake, that St Peter had been invested, by his Master, with the power and authority, as is pretended by the Romanists, where is the proof of its transference to the Bishops of Rome? There must be a clear title made out in plain, unmistakable, biblical terms before the claim can be allowed. It is even doubtful whether St Peter was ever Bishop of Rome; if history do not deceive us, we learn that Linus was the first Bishop of that city. And if St Peter's Episcopate at Rome cannot be established on authentic historical data, neither can it be maintained that "Rome is the Mother and Mistress of all the Churches." If this privilege is to be claimed in behalf of any Church upon the earth, it belongs most unquestionably to Jerusalem, the cradle of Christianity; from whence Christ's Gospel first issued; and where it first took root on the day of Pentecost, and when "Peter standing up with the eleven," preached the first Christian sermon, opening the kingdom of heaven to the devout Jews assembled at Jerusalem. If this be so—and no one who believes in the inspiration of the New Testament can possibly doubt it—what becomes of the pretension that Rome is the Mother and Mistress of all the Churches? If she be a mother, she is at best but a step-mother; and if she be a mistress, she is at best but a very tyrannical woman.

But we will proceed now to examine the history and character of some of the Popes, beginning with the earlier ones, to inquire, whether the characteristic of infallibility and divine Vicegerency can be made out and supported in favour of the pretended successors of the first Pontiff, the Galilean fisherman.

It is well known, that even in the apostolic age grievous errors had cropped up in the Church of Christ; and these spread far and wide, and assumed various characters and forms, as the number of the Christians multiplied and increased. It was a most frequent practice, by vain and speculative theorists, falsely called philosophers, to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel, by blending its doctrines with the dreams of the Oriental and Egyptian Philosophy. Thus, about the middle of the second century, a notable heresiarch, Cerdon, found his way to Rome, where he taught his pestilential tenets utterly subversive of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. And it may well excite our astonishment to learn from the writings of Irenæus,\* a contemporary, that even the successor of St Peter, the head of the infallible Catholic Church, fell into the snare, and gave countenance to the prevailing heresy. A very short time after, in the year 161, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a still more notable deceiver, Montanus, who declared himself to be the promised

\* Irenæi *Adversus Hæreses*, lib. iii. cap. 4, p. 206. Oxon, 1702. See also Lardner's *Hist. of the Heresies of the two first Centuries*, vol. iv. pp. 586, 624, 4to ed.

Paraclete, the Comforter, made his appearance in Rome, and two of its Bishops, Elutherius and Victor, supported him, and favoured his pretensions to Divine inspiration.\* At a subsequent period, during the baptismal controversy with the heretics, who insisted on baptizing only in the name of the Father, and omitting altogether, in the Sacrament, the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Pope Stephen, who filled the chair of St Peter, cast in his lot with the heretical section, and pronounced such baptism to be valid. But a still more painful and fatal instance of defectibility and worthlessness in the character of one of the Vicars of Christ occurred in the reign of Dioclesian, the most fierce persecutor of the Christians. Marcellus, presiding at that time over the See of Rome, and required either to perform an act of idol-worship, or to incur the death-penalty, apostatised ; and Judas-like denied his Master.† At the same time, it is but just to record, that he subsequently repented of his grievous apostasy ; though his failure is a notable and irreparable flaw in the pretended character of infallibility, as Christ's representative upon the earth.

\* "Fuit ergo tum temporis Romanus Pontifex qui novas Montani prophetias approbavit; et per litteras Montanistis communionem impertiit quos error cognito revocare coactus est."—*Dupin, De Ant. Ecc. Disc.*, Diss. v. p. 346.

“Au contraire le Pape seduit par leur austérité les reçut dans sa communion, ce qui montre que le Pape n'était pas infallible.”—*Baunage, Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. p. 360.

† Platina's Lives of the Popes, p. 39; Baunage, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, vol. i. tit. 4, p. 32.

But we pass on to the fourth century, the most important epoch in the early history of the Church, when Christianity had gained the mastery over heathenism, and fought its way up to the throne of the Cæsars. That period gave birth to men of vast minds and ideas, as well as of imperishable renown, such men as the Chrysostoms and the Gregories, and we may add the name of Athanasius too. We cherish a great respect for that illustrious and undaunted champion of the true Christian faith, though his creed has become somewhat unfashionable and unpalatable to the meagre theologians of the nineteenth century ; and, we are bound to say, to many also who are styled evangelical Christians.

The Church, having now obtained comparative rest from without, the arm of persecution being stayed by the conversion of Constantine, its peace was greatly disturbed by dissensions and feuds from within. The first great dispute, on which Constantine had to exercise the authority he had acquired in the Church, was the schism of the Donatists. It was in the year 313, the next after the edict of Milan, while the Emperor was hardly yet recognised as a believer, that an epistle was conveyed to him in Gaul, where he tarried at the time, complaining of the unsoundness in doctrine of Cæcilian, Bishop of Carthage. A Council of seventy prelates of the province had cited Cæcilian to meet this charge, but the Bishop was supported by the partial favour of his own flock, and that of the See of Rome ; he, there-

fore, refused to attend the Council. He was condemned in contumacy, his consecration was declared invalid, and another bishop elected in his place. As he persisted, however, to execute his functions, an appeal was addressed to the Emperor, who summoned a Council to assemble at Rome for the convenience of all parties, and appointed the Bishop of that city to preside, to determine the question at issue. The ecclesiastics, to show their appointment as proceeding from the civil power, assembled in a hall in the Lateran Palace, the residence of the Emperors, and recently inhabited by Constantine during his visit at Rome. As the decision of the Council proved unsatisfactory to the African prelate, and the peace of the Church continued in a state of the greatest disturbance, Constantine, on renewed appeals being addressed to him, convoked by his own fiat the Council of Arles, in the following year. That Council was more numerously attended than that held in Rome, and the Bishops who were called to take part in it, were confined to three or four provinces of the West. They deliberately ratified the previous decision against the Donatists, and condemned the schism, which could no longer be ignored.

Now, we have given this brief sketch of those transactions, which occupy such considerable space in the early history of the Church, in order to nullify and extinguish the pretensions of the Papacy. Where is its primacy, its supremacy, its lordship over the Christian Church? Had such existed and been

acknowledged in those days, when the Church had gained stability and power, is it likely, we ask in the name of common sense, that the calling of ecclesiastical Councils, and appeals to decide on Christian doctrine and discipline, would have been committed into the hands of an Emperor scarcely broken loose from heathenism? What, if the Bishop of Rome could have established his claim to supremacy in the Church, to be the living representative of Christ upon the earth, the infallible oracle of God, would he have failed to assert, and the Church to have acknowledged his title and dignity; and consequently, as supreme ruler of all religious and ecclesiastical questions, would he not have presided over the Councils, and, by his sentence, settled every disputed point? On the contrary, it appears that the Church—the vast majority of the Emperor's Christian subjects—blindly thrust, unclaimed, into his hands the prerogative of spiritual authority, and without protest or opposition from the Vicar of Christ. Constantine was evidently reluctant to strain or abuse the power thus unexpectedly confided to him; and though scarcely a Christian at this time, yet he had penetration enough to see that ecclesiastical controversies ought to be determined by ecclesiastical councils. But one thing he failed to see—and no wonder, for the thing had then no existence—that the Bishop of Rome was the head and supreme over all Christian Churches, and the infallible interpreter of the inspired Word of God.

And now, let us ascend the stream of time a little higher ; let us take a brief survey of the great Arian controversy, which ten years later inflamed the public mind at Alexandria, and throughout the East. Constantine, a layman and still unbaptized, was called upon to determine this great controversy, and to settle the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. The Emperor again convoked an assembly of Divines, and provided that their number should be considerable. Accordingly, in the month of June 325, the great and memorable Council of Nicæa, in Bithynia, met, under the presidency of Constantine, and was composed of three hundred and eighteen prelates. It is allowed, that the meeting of this Council presents one of the most remarkable epochs in human history. The question before the Council was of the deepest spiritual interest ; nothing less than the inquiry into the nature of the Godhead. This was the apple of discord which expiring paganism had cast into the bosom of the triumphant Church of Christ. The defeat of paganism under Constantine provoked the philosophy of the age to set up a plurality of gods, varying in degree and authority, against the unity and supremacy of the God of the Christians. The doctrine of the Trinity—or rather its perversion—gave the pretext, and originated the vast and troubrous Arian controversy, which shook the Church to its very centre. The question for the Nicæan Council to decide was, not so much what is the relation of the Son to the Father, as—what has

history, is preserved in the grateful tradition of families. Then followed the sages, the men of letters, famous for their preaching and their writings. Theodorus of Tassus, educated at Athens; Leontius of Cæsarea, the master of Gregory of Nazianzen; Eustathius of Antioch; Macarius of Palestine; Marcellus of Ancyra, of restless but powerful genius; and among the numbers of the important personages of the day, the venerable Alexander, leaning on his young adviser Athanasius, from whom he was known to be inseparable, and whose rising talent and ardent energy were already recognised. Amidst all the Orientals, Pæderotius of Heraclea, Protagoras of Sardica, Alexander of Thessalonica, Eustorgius of Milan, Capito of Sicily, Nicasius, Bishop of Digna in Provence, Cæcilian of Carthage, figured a representative of the West."

But where all the while is the Head of the Church, the universal Catholic Bishop, the Holy Father, supreme of all as the Vicar of Christ on earth? Will he not be present amid this galaxy of Christian luminaries?—will he, the Apostle's special successor and representative, fail to enlighten the Church and the world on the essential point of doctrine in dispute and about to be settled? Yes, the historian, a Roman Catholic, continues to say that "at their head appeared the deputation from the *Bishop*," not the "Pope of Rome, St Sylvester, whose great age did not allow him to leave his See. It consisted of two priests, Vito and Vincentius, and was directed by

the friend of Constantine, the luminary of Spain, Hosius of Corduba." Then, we learn, that, while "the Bishop of Rome, St Sylvester," was unable to attend the Council, by reason of his advanced age, he had deputed two humble priests, of no influence or ecclesiastical dignity whatsoever, to represent him; charged however with no pontifical brief, bull, decretal, or any other authoritative proposal from the supreme Head of the Church, to the vast assembly of subordinate prelates; those delegates being "directed," as we are told, "by the friend of Constantine, the luminary of Spain, Hosius of Corduba," and then the narrative concludes in the following words: "Lastly, two barbarians, one a Persian, John, and one a Goth, Theophilus, completed this assembly of the human race. The very diversity of their accents, and even of their idioms, brought out in a more touching manner their community of sentiment. It recalled the gift of tongues and the first Pentecost. On that day all the dispersed nations reunited, after the lapse of three centuries, proud of the trials they had suffered for the symbol of the faith, and of the innumerable offspring they had born to Christ."\*

Now, if there be one fact more than another to be gathered from the constitution of this great Council of Nicæa, it is most assuredly this, that the office and authority of a Universal Bishop, of an infallible guide and ruler in the whole body of the Church, was at that time utterly unknown and unacknow-

\* De Broglie, *l'Eglise et l'Empire*, vol. ii. p. 17.

ledged. The semi-Christian Emperor convened and presided over the assembly; Rome can hardly be said to have had a voice in the Council, as its illustrious members would scarcely attach much weight and consideration to the two obscure priests, who appeared in some equivocal way, to represent its Bishop. From whence, then, are we to date the assumed supremacy and universal authority of the See of Rome? It is historically clear, and beyond all doubt, that, if such a claim had been advanced, it was not received or acknowledged at that early period. And on what better grounds and pleas could the claim be rested and established in later times?

The well-known decision of Nicæa was mainly arrived at by the genius and fervour of Athanasius. He appears to have been the leading mind in the Council, while the Emperor, though its presiding head, can scarcely be said to have assumed formally the direction of its discussions; leaving it to his adviser Hosius, and to his favourite Eusebius, to be his spokesmen. With such a historical and undeniable fact before us, what can be said of the intelligence or honesty of those who stand up and cling to the theory of the Papacy? who maintain that Christ has invested Peter with the lordship over the universal Church, that Peter has transferred the office to the Bishops of Rome in succession; and yet we find, that in the earliest ages of Christianity, and on the most momentous occasions, the Roman

Episcopate could not pretend to the remotest pre-eminence, and, in so important a Council as that of Nicæa, it was hardly represented. The cry “*Tu es Petrus*,” we must pronounce a sham and an imposture.

Our subsequent information, as unfolded by the testimony of history, will only serve to confirm this postulate more strongly. The Arian heresy, which had been checked, if not extinguished, by the decision of the Council, and Constantine’s support and protection of the orthodox faith, revived and spread afresh, after the demise of that Emperor, and under the fostering hand of his immediate successors. Arianism was adopted at Court and in high places; and the persecution which raged against the Trinitarian Christians was as fierce and relentless as that endured by martyrs and confessors, in the reign of the worst and most cruel heathen Emperors.

The seat of the Empire having been removed to the East, and the Court held at Constantinople; Arianism, protected by the Emperor Constantius, rapidly spread over the whole body of the Eastern Church, while in the West the true faith still predominated. But Constantius, in his blind zeal for the heretical dogma, proceeded to the West, resolved by force to suppress the scriptural creed established by the Nicæan Council. At this period, in 352, Liberius filled the Roman Episcopate, and who, though styled “Pope” by Dupin and Baronius of comparatively modern days, yet, by the ancient his-

torians, is simply designated as "Bishop" of Rome. Constantius convoked two successive Councils of Bishops; the one at Arles, and the other, more numerously attended, at Milan; where, whether by promise or by threats, the Arian heresy was adopted by the Western Church, with some noble exceptions among the prelates. Paul, Bishop of Treves; Eusebius of Versailles, Dionysius of Milan, and Lucifer of Calaris, bravely resisted the tyrant, and stood up for the true faith of the apostolic Church. Liberius likewise remained faithful, at first, to the Nicæan creed, sending a sympathising epistle to his brethren, the prelates, who had been deprived and banished; praising their constancy, and declaring his readiness to share, if needs be, their exile, and to submit to any weight of suffering that might be laid upon him. His resistance so provoked the Emperor, that he caused him to be arrested, and brought a prisoner to Constantinople; whence he was sent into exile, rather than renounce the faith of the orthodox Church. But his constancy broke down and failed him in the scene of his banishment. Demophilus, the Bishop of Bœra, the place to which Liberius had been banished, persuaded the Vicar of Christ formally to adopt the heretical creed of the Arians; and with the zeal of a new convert, Liberius sent letters to the Eastern Bishops, fraught with protestations of his approval of the Arian formulary of faith, and entreating them to move the Emperor to restore him to his former See. "Liberius," it is related by a

French writer, "was possessed of a most edifying constancy; he held a most decided language towards the Emperor, and would not be shaken either by the entreaties or the threats of that Prince. He was exiled and banished to Berea, where, for the space of two years, he endured many sufferings, with a laudable and patient dignity. Hearing, however, that Felix, one of his clergy and confidential friends, was about to be raised to the Episcopate which he had filled, he resolved to sign the heretical confession of Sirinium; at the same time addressing a most contrite petition to the Emperor, entreating to be restored to the See of Rome. After he had abjured the Faith, and cringed to the Emperor, and flattered largely the Arian Bishops, the abettors of persecution, he gained his end." \*

Shortly after his restoration, Liberius, violating his pledge to the Emperor and to the Eastern prelates, changed his mind a second time; and laying aside his great zeal for Arianism, put on again the robe of an orthodox Bishop. No wonder that such staunch Romanists as Baronius and Bellarmine should struggle very hard but very unsuccessfully to get rid of such an ugly fact, which cuts so deep into the title of the Holy Fathers, the indefectible, infallible Successor of the Apostle Peter. But there are other Roman Catholics, more honest and upright, than the aforementioned writers, who frankly admit the flaw in the title, and make no attempt to falsify facts.

\* Barnage, *Histoire de l'Eglise*. Rotterdam, folio, tom. i. 366.

Dupin acknowledges the lapse of Liberius and his cordial subscription of the Arian heresy.\* Without naming other authorities, we would but refer to St Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who, as an eye-witness of Liberius's defection, makes use of very strong language, pronouncing the heretical doctrine which the Bishop had embraced, as "a blasphemous creed," and uttering, moreover, the following expressions: "I anathematise thee, O Liberius, thee and thy companions. O Liberius, thou art a prevaricator."†

Is it not truly astounding and staggering to think that, in our enlightened and critical age, there should be found in this land of ours—whence Papal darkness and despotism have been banished for upwards of three hundred years—men of sober and grave minds, who are craving and talking of reunion with a system whose very foundation is based on mendacity and delusion.

In proceeding with our inquiry we have before us another signal instance of proving the utter fallacy of the Papal pretensions; which, gradually struggling into existence, were boldly and strenuously denied and resisted in the fifth century. The peace of the Church was then greatly disturbed by the outbreak of another serious controversy, the Pelagian, which affected both sections of the Church, the Western and Eastern. It took its rise in Rome, where Pelagius, a British monk, and his associate Celestius,

\* Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.*, vol. ii. p. 36.

† *Sancti Hilarii Opera*, fol., Parisiis, 1693. *De Synodis*, p. 1115.

propagated their peculiar opinions on the subject of free-will, and the merit of works. Meeting with strong opposition to his dogmata in the West, Pelagius, hoping for better success in the East, repaired to Jerusalem, where he was favourably received by John, Bishop of that city. There were, at the same time, two Gallican Bishops at Jerusalem, Heros and Lazarus, who, reprobating the unsound opinions of Pelagius, sent an abstract of them to the African prelates; and a Council of Bishops having assembled at Carthage, these opinions were unanimously and formally condemned as heretical. Pelagius now appealed against this sentence to the Roman See—a mode of proceeding which Dupin is candid enough to own “to be contrary to the order and custom of the time.” But the chair of St Peter was, at this time, filled by a most aspiring and ambitious ecclesiastic, Zosimus, who had begun to talk very big about the prerogatives and supremacy of the Roman Church. But how did the Holy Father deal with the two heretical teachers, Pelagius, and his companion Celestius? Let us learn this from the language of Dupin: \* “He,” Zosimus, the Bishop of Rome, “deals with their accusers as unworthy persons, upbraiding Lazarus as one who made it his business to accuse the innocent, and blaming the African Bishops for being so easily persuaded by the word of such accusers,” gives sentence in favour of the heretics.

\* Dupin, vol. iii. p. 308.

And here it behoves us to notice the amiable feeling which seemed to have possessed the Vicar of Christ in siding with the heretics. The Gallican Bishops of those days were not disposed to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pontiff, to yield him a slavish homage, and almost divine worship, like the French prelates—the Dupanloups and the like—of the present day. Proculus, Bishop of Marseilles, resisting an attempted encroachment on his diocesan rights, by Zosimus, was summoned to Rome, to answer for his contumacious conduct to the Mother and Mistress of all Churches. Proculus, however, ventured to disobey the mandate of the Roman Bishop; whereupon Zosimus addressed a brief to the Church at Marseilles, directing the community to expel their Bishop, by force of arms if necessary. The flock proved as contumacious as their shepherd; the population of Marseilles snapped their fingers at the arrogant Romish priest; they clung around their Bishop with the most affectionate attachment; being, as we are informed by Jerome in his letter to Rusticus, “a most holy and learned Bishop, who had been very badly used by the Pope.” Now, as Heros and Lazarus had espoused the cause of their colleague Proculus, Zosimus allowed his revengeful feelings against those two prelates to influence his judgment in the case of the heretical teachers. Such appears to have been the opinion of Dupin—a Roman Catholic writer—who states, “One may easily see the reason why Zosimus did so much desire to invalidate the

judgment given against Pelagius and Celestius; their accusers being Heros and Lazarus, friends of Proculus, Bishop of Marseilles, he eagerly persecuted Proculus and his adherents. He would have been glad to have found matter of accusation against Heros and Lazarus by causing them to be regarded as false accusers; perhaps this was that made him favour Celestius and Pelagius.”\*

It is not, of course, for us to say how far M. Dupin is warranted in imputing so sinister a motive to His Holiness the Pope; but one thing is clear and incontrovertible, not only that His Holiness did not scruple to support heresy, but that his pretended authority and supremacy in the Church was not acknowledged, but repudiated and denied. For when the decision of Zosimus was made known in Africa, the Bishops unanimously rejected it, declaring, “that the cause, having originated in Africa, had been already decided there; and Celestius could not appeal to the Pope, nor could he take cognisance of it,” adding, that His Holiness had been deceived by the wily heretics.† The Pope, thus thwarted and set at nought by so important and influential a branch of the Christian Church as the African, took second thoughts, acknowledged his error, and accepted the decree of the Council of Carthage. Hence, it would appear that “non possumus” had not yet come into fashion at Rome, though the

\* Dupin, p. 209.

† Dupin’s Compendium of Eccl. History, vol. i. 12mo, p. 179.

Popery of the middle ages began gradually and cautiously to raise its head. In the mind of Augustine, of Jerome, and of Ambrose, the idea of a spiritual Sovereignty, with a visible head, was vividly impressed, and unfolded in their writings. The Bishops of Rome seized upon the idea, and built upon it the historical Papacy of a later day. Rome, before the removal of the Empire to the Eastern city, on the shore of the Bosphorus, was still the Mistress of the world, the "Eternal City," the seat of learning and civilisation; and how easy to persuade the world that Rome was also chief and supreme in the Christian Church; that its Bishops were the visible head of that spiritual kingdom, which Christ came to set up on the earth, and whose image possessed so vivaciously the minds of the holy men whose names have just been given. Nevertheless, before the Papacy could attain to something like its mediæval power and importance, it had to pass through many vicissitudes, and dark and discouraging stages and trials; as though to give an imperishable contradiction to its vain and high-sounding pretensions. The arrest of Liberius by Constantius—his deprivation and imprisonment—his exile and lapse into heresy—his restoration to the See of Rome, and forfeiture of his pledge—all this could not possibly impress the world with the idea that the Bishop of Rome was, to all intents and purposes, God's representative upon earth, the Vicar of Christ, and the supreme Head of all Christ's dis-

ciples. If the See of Rome thus lost in this instance, and on other occasions, the degree of credit and influence it had acquired ; it attained great consideration and pre-eminence under the Episcopate of Innocent I. and the first of the Leos, who were really good and wise men ; and who, favoured by the political circumstances of the times—the irruption of the barbarians, and the distracted and disturbed state of Rome—took a commanding part in public affairs, and in civic administrations. But there was as yet no pretension to anything like Temporal Power, which is now held—and by no one more tenacious than by the proselyted Dr Manning—to be an essential and indispensable attribute of the Successor of the Galilean fisherman. The plea which is at present so loudly and strenuously raised for the Pontiff's Sovereignty and unlimited independence, as an absolute appendage to his spiritual supremacy, was in those days utterly unknown and unheard of. On the contrary, the Justinian Code, which was then given to the world, not only curbed every pretension to secular power on the part of the Roman Bishops, but it went even so far as to invade their spiritual province. The first principle of Justinian's legislation was, the emanation of all authority, both ecclesiastical and civil, from the reigning Sovereign. The Emperor's vast and memorable code, while recognising the primacy of the See of Rome, at the same time set limits to that pre-eminence, and to the boundaries of its jurisdiction. The Bishop of Rome

was declared to be the subject of the Emperor of Rome; bound to obey every imperial decree and ordinance, and, when required, to publish them in the several churches.

It is hard to imagine on what ground and by what arguments the advocates of the Temporal Power can possibly raise a claim in its favour and establish its title. It is certain that St Peter was not vested with temporal power by his Master, in that promise of St Matthew's Gospel, on which the whole system of Romanism is made to rest. And allowing for a moment that all the authority and prerogative bestowed upon Peter were transmitted to the Bishops of Rome as his successors; where is their title-deed to make good their claim to secular dominion? And if the arm of the earthly rule be so absolutely essential, as we are assured, to uphold and give effect to the spiritual machinery of the Romish Church, how comes it to pass that the Church existed, held on its way, and wrought so many wonders as it is boasted of by the Romanists, without possessing, for many centuries, any temporal power? Can we credit the Ultramontane party with a sincere reliance on the promise, which they exclusively appropriate to the Roman Church, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," when, to ward off danger, they trust not in the Divine promise, but in the bayonets of French Zouaves, Antibes legions, and the power of France? Which of the Apostles declared that "they who use the sword shall perish with the sword?"—

was it not St Peter? And are not the Bishops of Rome confessedly successors of St Peter, the Vicars of Him who said, almost with His dying breath, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight."

But we must now recur to the days of the Emperor Justinian, and take up afresh the thread of our narrative. It was during the reign of this monarch—who bore some marks of resemblance to our James I—that the Eutychian heresy had risen to its height, and which was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, the fourth Ecumenical Council. Justinian, and his consort, Theodora, took opposite parts in the agitation which then convulsed the bosom of the Church. The Empress sided with the heretical party, and afforded protection to Servius, who was most active in disseminating the erroneous doctrine; while the Emperor declared in favour of the orthodox party. Theodora, in her overflowing zeal for the success of the heresy, undertook to promote Vigilius, a Roman ecclesiastic, who happened at that time, in the year 530, to be at Constantinople, to the See of Rome, on condition that he engaged to support the heterodox dogmata in the Western Church, with all his authority and power. Vigilius readily entered into the views of the Empress, and proceeded to Rome, furnished with letters to Belisarius, the commander of the Imperial forces in the West, recommending him for promotion to the Episcopate of that city. Meanwhile the Roman clergy and people had

elected a Bishop of their own, and Vigilius found the office in occupation of another. But Vigilius was not the kind of man to allow this obstacle to bar his way to the dignity he was coveting. "Having delivered," we are told by M. Dupin, to "Belisarius the order which he brought, and having promised him two hundred pieces of gold, over and above the seven hundred he was to give him, found no great difficulty in persuading him to drive away Silverius," the Bishop in possession.\* Belisarius, on the pretext of having discovered that Silverius had been carrying on a treasonable correspondence with the enemy, the Gothic chief, deprived him of his episcopal rank and function, and placed him in the hands of his rival. Vigilius banished the deposed Bishop to the island of Palmeria, where he is said to have died of famine and destitution. The usurper, however, was not allowed to enjoy for any length of time his ill-gotten office and dignity. To disarm the opposition, and to conciliate the good opinion of the clergy and Roman people, Vigilius renounced the false dogmata of the Servians, and returned to the true faith. This change greatly incensed his protectress, the haughty and vindictive Theodora, who summoned him to repair to the Imperial Court at Constantinople. This city was at that time greatly disturbed by the feud which had broken out between the Emperor and Origen, who was openly charged with heresy. Justinian published a decree, condemning not only the opinions

\* Dupin's Ecol. History, vol. v. p. 46.

of this great author, but also those of the numerous sects which had emanated from the Eutychian heresy. The Empress, of course, espoused the cause of Origen, and called to her aid Theodorus, Bishop of Cæsarea, who was known to be the friend of Origen, and who also favoured the sects. Justinian being persuaded by Theodorus to recall his condemnatory edict of Origen, and to compromise matters with the several sects, incurred the displeasure of Vigilius, the Roman Bishop, who was now animated by extraordinary zeal for the orthodox creed, and who, on his arrival at Constantinople, refused to hold communion with the Patriarch and the rest of the Eastern Bishops. Theodora, however, it seems found means—we are told by golden arguments—to abate the Bishop's zeal so recently acquired, to reconcile him with his brethren the prelates, and to give his sanction to the Emperor's measures. But, alas ! for the successor of St Peter ! this vacillation at Constantinople aroused the indignation of the African, and many of the Asiatic and European Bishops, who, in a solemn Council, held in Africa in the year 550, excommunicated Vigilius, and withdrew from all communion with him. The poor Pope was now in the greatest strait and perplexity; he determined, however, to veer round again to the West, as the chair of St Peter was far too attractive to be lost for another change of mind. Accordingly he turned his back on his Eastern heterodox friends, denounced the Emperor's decree in favour of the sects, and returned to his See

at Rome. "We have seen," so writes Basnage,\* "a Pope who has already changed his mind three times. In Rome, he was orthodox; at Constantinople, he was heterodox. He came with the design of supporting 'Three Chapters,' (Justinian's decree in favour of the orthodox faith so-called.) Such was his intention on his arrival. He excommunicated those who condemned the decree of the Three Chapters. A little while after he submitted to the authority of Justinian and gave his sanction to that edict, but he changed his mind a third time, and anathematised all who should defend that decree." An ugly flaw in Papal infallibility!

In the following reign, that of the Emperor Heraclius, we are presented with another painful instance of equal defectibility on the part of Christ's Vicar. Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had embraced the Monotholite heresy—a modification of the Eutychian—obtained the Emperor's support in its favour, and endeavoured to promote its universal adoption in all the Eastern Churches. He met, however, with strong resistance from Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, and many other Eastern Prelates. But Sergius, intent on his object, addressed himself to Honorius, the Bishop of Rome, asking for his powerful influence to carry his point. The Eastern Bishops had likewise applied to the Roman See, in opposition to Sergius, and for support to sustain the true faith of the gospel. Strange to say—it might almost ap-

\* *Histoire de l'Eglise*, vol. i. p. 526-7.

pear incredible, but facts are stubborn things—the Holy Father pronounced in favour of the heretical party at Constantinople, and thus adopted the Monotholite heresy.

It might be curious to know what the devoted followers of the Papacy have to say in support of those attributes, which are all but divine, they ascribe to the Pontiff, when the whole of their theory from beginning to end is contradicted and overthrown by the unmistakable and universal testimony of history. Will not every sound and rational feeling of our nature rise and revolt against the assumption that the Bishop of Rome is Christ's Vicar on earth, when some of the earliest successors of Peter embraced the deadliest heresies, such as Arianism, utterly subversive of Christ's mission and gospel? Can we seriously assume that he who dishonours his Master is, nevertheless, that Master's representative, his *Alter Ego*? Could such a thing be supposed in the relation of an earthly ambassador and his Sovereign? The Vicar of Christ to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine, shifting his opinion, whether orthodox or heterodox, as it suits the times, or the interests of the moment!

But we have yet graver things to consider as witnessing against the fabulous pretensions of the Papacy. Before, however, we pass on to other topics, let us recur for a little while to the career of His Holiness Pope Honorius. Constans, having succeeded Heraclius in the Empire, in order to allay the strife of

contending sects and parties in the Church, published an edict imposing silence upon all the disputants. This, however, roused the ire of the Roman Bishop, Martin I., who called together a Council in Lateran, of one hundred and five prelates, who unanimously condemned the edict of Constans, as well as Honorius as an abettor of heresy ; and consigned him and his heretical followers to “ his Satanic Majesty and his angels.” At a somewhat later period, in the next reign—that of Constantine Pogonatus—a General Council was called by the Emperor’s command—the sixth Ecumenical Council, and the third of Constantinople—at which all the heretical opinions afloat were authoritatively condemned, and both Sergius and “ Pope Honorius ” anathematised for having lapsed into the Monotholite heresy.

It may be supposed that this is rather an inconvenient fact in the way of the Romanists to patch up the Papal pretensions of indefectibility, as successors of St Peter, and of supremacy in the Church. Here we have the deliberate sentence of two Councils—that of the Lateran consigning the Head of the Church “ to the devil and his angels,” and that of Constantinople fixing upon him the stigma of heretic. Baronius, indeed, labours very hard, but most unsuccessfully, to get over the difficulty ; but Dupin, also a Roman Catholic, but honest and upright, fully admits the defection of Pope Honorius, though it tends to invalidate all the high-sounding claims of the Roman See. Dupin, referring to the sentence

pronounced by the Council against Honorius, states that “they condemned him for delivering in his letters things contrary to the doctrine of the Apostles, the definition of the Councils, and the judgment of all the Fathers; for following the false doctrine of heretics; for approving in everything the impious opinion of Sergius; for writing a letter tending to the same impiety; for preaching, teaching, and spreading the heresy of one operation and one will” in the Saviour, which is the Monotholite heresy.

The Pontificate of Gregory the Great, as he was justly called, cast a temporary lustre over the dark shades of the Papacy. He rescued the chair of St Peter from the odium which had been gathering around it. Gregory's ambition was not that of “lording it over God's heritage,” the Church, to trample into the mire the civil power, to cast down all secular rule and authority, and to build upon it the ecclesiastical dominion and supremacy, as was done by his namesake, Gregory VII., the notorious Hildebrand; but his ambition was that of ruling the Household of faith in the spirit of a Christian Pastor, of arresting the invasion of the barbarians, and labouring for their conversion from a false creed to the true dogmata of the gospel; and, at the same time, grappling with the anarchy and destitution of the Imperial city. The temporal power was no doubt held and exercised by Gregory, but it was not of his own seeking, it was actually forced upon him.\*

\* It is well known that he declared that “he is Antichrist, who assumes the name of Sovereign Pontiff.”

He knew nothing, and dreamt of nothing less than “the patrimony of St Peter,” or of “Peter’s pence.” Such claims are impudent inventions of later days; and though sheer fables, for the most part, resting on forged instruments, yet they command, in this our own land, and in these days of our advancing intelligence and civilisation, their full share of historical authenticity and antiquity; so that many of our aristocracy, whether native Roman Catholics or proselytes to Popery, occasionally appeal to the public; among the number, especially, a nobleman, a proselyte, who is foremost in his zeal for collecting the tribute of “Peter’s pence” due to the successors of that Apostle. But where is your warrant, you deluded Romanists? Did the earlier Bishops of Rome demand it? Would not Gregory have incited the Roman people to the collection of this tax, especially under the existing circumstances of the times? The invasion of the Lombards, under Odoacer, reduced the whole of Italy to a most miserable condition of desolation and distress. The cultivation of the soil had almost everywhere ceased. Famine and pestilence had well-nigh depopulated the land. In the city of Rome itself famine and disease had spread to a most frightful extent and broken the spirit of the proud citizens. Gregory, on whom the administration of affairs was forced, proved himself equal to the situation. By his wise measures and policy, he restored the country to a degree of order and prosperity; but he never dreamt of sending the

begging-box throughout the length and breadth of Christendom craving for Peter's pence. That despicable traffic had not yet soiled the hands of Peter's successors.

It were well, it would be most gratifying and desirable, if we could describe in equally eulogistic language the character and conduct of many others of the Holy Fathers, the successors of St Peter. But the page of history, which cannot be smothered or silenced, unfolds a dark and appalling picture of the Popes who succeeded the Great Gregory. Their sole aim appears to have been earthly aggrandisement, ambitious elevation, to set the Papal chair above every worldly throne and dominion, to trample on the crouching neck of a prostrate world, and to rule absolutely over the bodies and souls of humankind ; and in pursuit of this one great end, every means was held to be lawful. The Popes, it is not too much to say, were, in many instances, the very fire-brands to kindle and to aliment wars and revolutions to make these subservient, whether to the end of grasping the temporal power, or to acquire territorial possession, or, in general, to extend the spiritual despotism. We pass by with little notice—the transaction being well known—the immunity which one of the Popes accorded to Phocas, the foul assassin, in return for being proclaimed universal Bishop, supreme Head of the Christian Church. Another Pontiff, Stephen II., addressed an epistle to Pepin, as though indicted by St Peter,—perhaps the most

innocent of all Papal forgeries,\*—calling upon him in the name of the Mother of God to make war upon the hated Lombards. Pepin, at the end of the struggle, rewarded St Peter by the Exarchate of Ravenna, which was bestowed, as a patrimony, on the successor of the poor fisherman, who owned but a boat and a net in this world. Charlemagne, kneeling at the feet of the Pontiff, to receive, at his hands, the iron crown, confirmed the dotation made by his father, and enlarged the patrimony.

But we can hardly pass over a notable instance of Papal delinquency of the eighth century, as recorded in the history of France, which serves to prove to what length the Pontiffs would really go in pursuance of their ambitious and worldly schemes. The French monarch, Louis I., was greatly harassed and troubled by the rebellious and treasonable actions of his sons. The king, hoping for assistance against the unnatural conduct of his children, applied to the Pope, Gregory IV., to act as mediator, and to redress his grievances. It was most assuredly a fitting opportunity, for a Christian Bishop, and especially the Holy Father, to employ his ghostly counsel and influence to allay the strife, to put an end to treason, and to take part with the legitimate and reigning Sovereign. But, strange to tell, the Vicar of Christ,

\* Fleury, remarking on the Pope's assumption of the name of St Peter, says, "That it shows the genius of the age, and to what extent the most grave of mankind may carry fiction when they consider it useful."—*Hist. Eccl.*, B. iii. 17.

of the Prince of Peace, took part with the traitorous sons, who were making war on their father. Repairing to the camp of the rebels, he issued a decretal, releasing all subjects from their allegiance to the King, and threatening all with the ban of the Church who should continue faithful to him. Some of the Bishops, however, notwithstanding this interdict, not only remained loyal to their Sovereign, while others had fallen away; but addressed a strong remonstrance to the Pope, expressive of their deep feeling of grief and sorrow that, considering his sacred office and functions, he should espouse the cause of a party who had violated the instincts of nature, the demands of honour, and of religion. Moreover, they reminded him of the oath which he had taken to Louis on his elevation to the Pontificate,—an oath which could not be violated without incurring the guilt of sacrilege.

Gregory, touched to the quick by this unexpected and sharp rebuke of some of the French prelates, was shaken for a moment in his purpose of supporting the traitors; but his wavering mind speedily inclined, at the instigation of some Roman monks, to the cause which he had originally upheld. He replied to the Bishops, in “terms of arrogance and severity, that the Imperial was inferior to the Papal authority.” Meanwhile, Louis assembled his troops to meet the rebels in the open field. When the two armies came in sight of each other, and the three revolted brothers became apprehensive of being defeated, the Holy Father repaired to the royal head-

quarters, ostensibly, but with perfidious intention, to negotiate terms of accommodation. He remained some days in the King's camp, all the while employing his time and influence in tampering with, and effectually corrupting, the troops. The whole army passed over to the rebels; the unhappy monarch, thus abandoned, was deposed by an assembly hastily called together by the traitors, and Lothaire, one of the rebel sons, was raised to the vacant throne. The Emperor, abandoned by his own, was forced to submit to his deposition, at Compiegne, by the Bishops. The Pope approved of the proceeding, such as was hitherto unheard of." \*

It is far from surprising that such unexampled treachery should have elicited the foregoing expression from even a Roman Catholic prelate. Who, indeed, could have expected to have heard of such an act of villainy, perpetrated by the Holy Father, the Apostle's successor? We wonder whether good Dr Manning, and those whom he proselyted to Romanism, have ever read this historical fact; if so, there must be, indeed, a most mysterious perversion of every faculty of the human soul, to believe in the divine delegation of the Bishops of Rome, and in all that is included in the system of Romanism.

We have a few more incidents to relate in connexion with the eighth century; at the same time observing, that we do not profess to proceed in regular chronological order.

\* Bossuet, *Discours sur l'Histoire*, tom. i. p. 9.

It appears that, on the death of Paul I. in the year 767, Toton, the Duke of Nepete, an influential Roman noble, was possessed of the idea to appropriate to his own family the rich endowments of that See, and to place his brother Constantine, a layman, in the chair of St Peter. Accordingly, in one day, Toton caused his brother, the layman, to be created Sub-Deacon, Deacon, and Pontiff.\* The fiercest opposition, however, was raised against this monstrous elevation; another Pope—one of the regular Bishops—was elected and set up. But this gave rise to a faction-fight in the streets of Rome, in which—each party fighting for its own Pope—many lives were lost, and among the rest the Duke also was slain. As soon as it was known that the Duke was dead, his brother was driven from the Lateran, with every mark of ignominy and contempt, and a monk, named Philip, was elevated to the Papal dignity by the conquering party. But he too fell into disgrace, and was set aside, on account of his incompetency, as we are informed by Dupin; † and, after a little while, Stephen, the third of that name, was elected Pope.

His Pontificate was not a bed of roses; his lot fell on evil days; the whole city was convulsed with the strife and contention of factions and parties. Hoping to allay the existing disorder and frequent disturbances, Stephen applied to the French Court, request-

\* Du Plessis Mornay, p. 141.

† Dupin's Compendium of Eccl. History, ii., cent. 8, p. 307.

ing that some influential Bishops of that nation might be sent to Rome to aid him in the work of pacification. Meanwhile the more zealous partizans of Stephen had seized Constantine, the lay-Pope, atrociously putting out his eyes, and pursuing with savage fury all who had favoured his cause. On the arrival of the French Bishops, a Council was called, before which the blind ex-Pope was made to appear, and who, on attempting to defend himself, was forcibly silenced, blows being actually inflicted, while he was driven from the Council. The Bishops then proceeded to declare his election unlawful, and all that was done during his Pontificate as null and void ; depriving of their holy orders those that had been ordained or consecrated by him ; and declaring, that for the space of one year, the period of his usurpation, there had been no lawful Head of the Church. The Pope appears to have been so deeply affected by the decision of the Council, that, with tears in his eyes, and on his knees, he confessed his error in that he had acknowledged the usurper as the rightful Head of the Church ; asking, in humiliating terms, forgiveness of the Council, and suffering the infliction of the imposed penance.\*

May we not recommend the whole of this transaction to the most serious consideration of those who are disposed to render almost idolatrous adoration to the Pope, to raise him above all human control, and as exempt from all human passions, to regard him

\* Dupin, vol. vi. p. 112.

as the Holy Father, as the personal representative of the Divine Saviour, the Son of God, and as such infallible and indefectible. How strange, without making reference to the lay-Pope, to behold the real Pope, on his knees before the Council, a suppliant for pardon, and a penitent for the transgressions he had committed ! Will it be pretended that he is the Vicar of Christ, the unerring Head of the whole body of the Catholic Church upon earth ? Are not these historical facts in themselves sufficient to cut up the whole Romish system root and branch, and leave its abettors speechless ? For, be it remembered, that those facts are related and authenticated by two independent Papal historians, not only by Dupin, but likewise by Platina, in his Lives of the Popes, a writer not likely to be suspected of disloyalty to the Papal system, but who, on the contrary, spares no pains to uphold the claims of infallibility and all other pretensions.

But we can hardly part with the eighth century without a brief notice of the conflict between the Eastern and Western branch of the Christian Church, which had broken out and raged so fiercely on the subject of image-worship ; and which caused so much bloodshed, misery, and desolation. Image-worship had, even in the earlier ages, worked its way into the Church, though denounced by some of the most ancient Fathers. Tertullian, in commenting on the Second Commandment observes, “ Images of these are idols or likenesses, and the consecrating these

idols or liknesses is idolatry."\* St Augustine, too, declared against image-worship, a practice which, in the fourth century, was beginning to gain great favour in the West; while in the East it met with considerable resistance.

It was, in fact, here in the East where the first impulse to the war, consequent on image-worship, was given. The Emperor, Phillipicus Bardanes, caused, in the year 712, a picture representing the Sixth General Council, to be taken down from its place in the Church of St Sophia, Constantinople, as that assembly had condemned the Monotholite heresy, to which he was attached. This act would probably have excited little or no notice; but the Emperor shortly after published an edict, directing all the images to be taken out of all the churches at Rome and Constantinople. This Imperial decree produced great excitement in the former city. The Pope, Constantine I., not only formally rejected that decree, but, to show his utter contempt of all Imperial interference in ecclesiastical matters, caused six pictures of the six General Councils to be placed in the Church of St Peter, and, at the same time, anathematised the Emperor. But, before the Papal interdict had reached Constantinople, Bardanes, by a revolutionary movement, had been deposed, and ceased to be Emperor.

The marked dislike of the Eastern Church to the adoration of images or pictures, was greatly stimulated and intensified by the taunting reproaches of the

\* Tertullian, *De Idol.*, c. iii. 4.

followers of Mohammed, the Arabian impostor, who had made considerable progress in the East, and come in contact with some of its Christian communities. Observing the idolatrous worship which the Christians were wont to pay to material objects—a practice regarded with special abhorrence by the disciples of the Crescent—they openly charged them with the superstitious usages of heathenism, and of placing the idols of the Pantheon in the house of the living and only true God. Fired with zeal to cast off this open reproach, the Emperor Leo Isaurius issued, in the year 726, a peremptory decree, commanding the immediate and total extermination of every kind of images and pictures; and prohibiting that none should any more be placed in the churches of the Empire, under any pretence whatsoever. It was this edict which gave rise to the civil war which raged with more than ordinary fierceness in the islands of the Archipelago and in Italy, where the idolaters met with a most active supporter in Pope Gregory II. The arguments which His Holiness addressed to the Emperor in defence of the idolatrous worship do not appear very forcible and convincing, except, perhaps, to those persons who, within the last twenty or thirty years, have embraced Romanism in this country. “The practice of the Roman Church,” Gregory declared to the Emperor, as an example to all others is, that “before the image of Jesus Christ, they pray, Lord Jesus save us; before the Virgin, Holy Mother of God intercede for us with thy Son;

before the saints, Intercede for us ;" and in reply to the Emperor's threat of destroying the Church of St Peter, the Pontiff simply declared that St Peter could take care of his own, for " St Peter was a god upon the earth." With such sentiments and language emanating from the Head of the Church, it is no wonder that the name of Christian became a taunt and a scoff to the Arab invaders of the Empire.

The Pope, being supported by the Lombard Princes, who, at any cost, felt eager to be released from all subjection to the Imperial Court, prosecuted the war with the utmost vigour. His successor, Gregory III., it is said, absolved the Italian subjects from their allegiance to the Emperor ; whether or not this be true, certain it is, that the entire population rose in arms against their lawful Sovereign, in which action they were directly encouraged by the Pope. This display of Papal arrogance and wickedness, moved, as it might have been expected, the Emperor Leo to more active measures of prosecuting his purpose ; and in order to give the greater weight and authority to his proceedings, he convened a Council, and obtained its sanction and approval. He now carried on a more open warfare against the images and wooden idols ; meeting, however, with much opposition even among his Eastern subjects—such deep root had the superstitious practice stricken in every part and section of the Church.

After the death of Leo, his son and successor Constantine pursued the same measures ; and like his

father, he called a Council, but one of greater note, known as the Seventh Council of Constantinople, which condemned and anathematised the image-worshippers. The two succeeding Emperors persevered in the same course, in no degree relaxing in zeal against the idolatrous worship; but a great change took place in the reign of Leo IV.

This unfortunate monarch fell a victim to the intrigue and wickedness of his consort, the Empress Irene; who, in order to be untrammelled in her profligate habits, and to carry out to the full her ambitious designs, poisoned her husband, and ruled the Empire during the minority of her son Constantine. This wicked woman, having committed a crime so foul and monstrous, received notwithstanding the countenance of the Holy Father, Adrian IV., who entered into friendly correspondence with her, encouraging her support of the idol-worship. To a criminal and usurper like Irene, it was of course of great moment to be acknowledged and patronised by the Holy Father, the supreme Head of the Church; and, in return, she could hardly do less than to show her entire subserviency to the wishes of His Holiness. Accordingly, Irene, in order to gratify the Pope's ambitious feelings, addressed him as the Universal Bishop, and proposed that he, in person, or by a Legate, should preside over the Council which was about to assemble at Nicæa to settle the question of the worship of images and other objects. We may be sure that the Pope readily acquiesced in the pro-

posal of Irene; and at the second Council held at Nicæa, in the year 781, image-worship was formally recognised and established. The ground on which the Council rested its decree in favour of that worship was no higher than that of tradition; it was declared, that images had been worshipped as a usage of the ancient Church, as sanctioned by all the earlier Fathers; reference was made to old legends, and an anathema was pronounced against all who refused to submit to the authority of the Church. Dupin—to whose candour we have before borne witness—readily admits that the Council decided in favour of image-worship on insufficient ground and authority.

But even in that age, and in the corrupt state of the Church at that period, considerable opposition was raised against the decree of the Nicæan Council. Among the foremost of the opponents of image-worship is to be reckoned the Emperor of the West, Charlemagne, who, though most devoutly attached to the See of Rome, and greatly obsequious to all Papal rule and authority, refused to acquiesce in the decree of the Council. Accordingly, he published a work in refutation of image-worship; and it is generally allowed that the arguments are most conclusive against that idolatrous practice; while it is supposed that the real author of the work was Alcnin, who allowed the Emperor to have the credit and honour of the production. The Pope, incensed at this lay interference in theological questions, and yet not

daring openly to break with the Emperor, confined his antagonism to the publishing of a short reply to the work of Charlemagne. But it tells little for, or rather very much against, Papal supremacy and infallibility, that in the face of the Holy Father's direct and public approval and sanction of image-worship, that practice was expressly and pointedly condemned by the Council of Frankfort, which met in the year 794 in that German city. Indeed, it must be sufficiently and indisputably evident, from all the historical facts which have been enumerated, that up to the very end of the eighth century, the Bishop of Rome was not regarded in the Church with that idolatrous reverence which the rabid Ultramontanists of the present day are disposed to manifest and to claim for him as though he were really God's Vicegerent on earth.

But we have a strange story to narrate, dating from the ninth century, which, it might have been supposed—if the Romanists were not utterly callous to every ordinary feeling of shame—would in itself have tended to hush and extinguish for ever all the Papal claims and pretensions. The story to which we allude is that of the female Pope, who filled the chair of St Peter between the Pontificate of Leo IV. and Benedict III., and whose career is really so marvellous that, if it were not authenticated by Roman Catholic writers themselves, as we shall show; it might appear utterly incredible, and as pertaining to the region of fiction or romance rather than of history.

It appears that a female, a native of Mayence, but of British descent, and whose name was *Agnes*, at an early age assumed, with the habiliments and manners of the opposite sex, the name of *John*; and, being of a studious turn of mind, repaired to Athens—then greatly renowned as a seat of learning and philosophy—to prepare and qualify herself for the calling which she had proposed to embrace. After a short residence at Athens, her sex being unsuspected, she was admitted into holy orders, and after a while she proceeded to Rome, the spot which held out the fairest prospect of ecclesiastical honours and emoluments.

*Agnes*, or *John* of Mayence, acquired very soon great notice and distinction in the Ecclesiastical Capital by her eloquence and learning. She became the centre of attraction; crowds flocked perpetually to her Confessional, and persons of all ranks and classes were constant attendants on her pulpit ministrations. She had become so great and universal a favourite—the odour of her sanctity had spread far and wide—that, at the death of *Leo IV.*, she was actually chosen as his successor, and that of *St Peter*. She had gained, says an ancient writer,\* the hearts of

\* *Alberti Krantzii, Rerum Germanica Metropolis, folio, 1576, lib. ii. cap. 40* :—“*Johannes Anglicus ex Moguntia mulier mentita sexum quum acutissimo ingenio et promptissimā lingua, doctissimè loqueretur; adeò in se convertit omnium animos, ut Pontificatum adipisceretur.*”

Bellarmino speaks thus of this writer, placing his authority very high as it regards this female Pope—an admission scarcely to have been expected from that quarter:—“*Krantzius homo Germanicus*

all men ; but, alas for human frailty, even in female Infallibility ! The fame and the Pontificate of this adventuress were but of short duration—little above two years. The exaltation to which she had attained proved too much for her equilibrium—it turned her head ; she disgraced herself, and fell into the lowest abyss of shame. She gave birth to an heir of St Peter's patrimony, an act which, of course, rendered the chair of St Peter vacant.

A scandal like this—so notorious and flagrant—created, as might have been expected indeed, a great stir and sensation throughout the whole of Christendom, drawing ridicule and contempt upon the Papacy—the Holy See. One can hardly feel surprised that the out and out Romanists—of the Manning, Cullen, and Dupanloup type—should have worked might and main in every succeeding age to smother the mishap, to expunge the fact from the page of history ; for it is a complete breakdown of the whole edifice piled on the pretended succession of St Peter, the Vicariate of Christ, and all the high-sounding titles and dignities of the Roman Bishops. A frail woman has despoiled the Supreme Pontiff, the Sovereign Pontiff, the Holy Father, of all his lustre and reverence !

The existence of this female Pope has been hotly contested ; and volumes upon volumes have been written on both sides of the question ; but, on weighing the arguments addressed for and against the fact,

et qui ante Lutheranas contentiones scripsit ; nec amore, nec odio docebatur."—*De effectu Sacram.*, lib. ii. cap. 9.

every candid mind must, we believe, acquiesce in the following remarks of the ecclesiastical historian, who states that, "upon a deliberate and impartial review of the whole matter, it will appear more than probable that some unusual event must have happened at Rome, from which the story derives its origin ; because it is not at all credible, upon any principle of moral evidence, that an event should be universally believed, and related in the same manner, by a multitude of historians, during five centuries immediately succeeding its supposed date, if that event was absolutely destitute of all foundation."\*

The truth is, that the fact had been attested for five hundred years, without an attempt at contradiction by historians of the Romish Church, by Papal secretaries, by librarians of the Vatican, by Bishops, Popes, and other eminent men, partisans of the Papacy. The first opposition raised against the fact was in the days of the Reformation ; when the scandal was brought against the See of Rome, and it was boldly, but ineffectually, attempted to be wiped out. Thus much is historically certain, that one of the Popes—of course whose dictum is infallible—acknowledges the fact in the following way. Pius II., in a letter he addressed to Nicholas, Bishop of Taborites, writes thus : "That in the election of that woman for Pope, there was no error in a matter of faith, nor *de jure*, but only an ignorance with regard to a matter of fact, and also that the story was not

\* Mosheim's Eccl. History, ix., cent. 7, part 2.

certain."\* We can hardly understand how the Pope could be doubtful in his own mind as to the uncertainty of the story, when we find that His Holiness placed the name of the woman in the catalogue of Pontiffs—a catalogue to which he affixed his name, and which was published by his authority. To doubt, then, the authenticity of the story, were to doubt the infallibility and veracity of the Vicar of Christ. Nor was the fact ever doubted, or called in question, until Luther urged it, with damaging effect, against the arrogant pretensions of the Papacy. This called up a number of Popish champions, to get rid, if possible, of so ugly a fact. The foremost was a Spanish friar, Onuphrius, who, in his notes on Platina's History of the Popes, flatly contradicts the whole story; without, however, enlightening the world as to the reasons for his incredulity. But the writer who made the greatest effort to remove this dark spot from the See of Rome, is a French lawyer, Florimond de Remond, originally a Protestant, a Huguenot, but who apostatised to the Church of Rome; and, as is usual with such proselytes, became the bitterest enemy of the faith in which he was born. It is remarked with respect to him, by a distinguished author, that "he tells us that he had been a Huguenot in his youth, but, if he himself is to be credited, he was rescued from the jaws of heresy by a miracle; no writer could be less qualified than he was to undertake the work, because of the hatred he bore to the

\* Dupin, Eccl. History, vol. xiii. p. 39.

religion in which he was brought up."\* Such was the great champion of the Papacy, to relieve it of its fatal dead-weight, but all whose arguments are most ably refuted by Dr A. Cooke, in his "Pope Joan's History Established."†

It is, indeed, in vain, on the part of the Romanists, to struggle ever so hard to remove this blot from their cunningly-devised system; the direct evidence attesting the Pontificate of Pope Joan is too conclusive to be overthrown, or set aside. One of the earliest witnesses, Marianus Scotus, informs us, in his chronicle, "that Joan, a woman, succeeded Leo IV., and sat two years five months and four days."‡ A writer of a later date, Martin Polonus, a friend of Pope Nicholas III., enters more fully into the extraordinary history of that remarkable female; and Platina, who is no mean authority, and not likely to say aught to the prejudice of the Papacy, quotes Polonus as "undeniable authority on the subject."§ A contemporary of Martin Polonus, Siegbertus, a monk, in his chronicle, published in the year 1113, bears the same witness to the history of Pope Joan, and declares, moreover, that "for the cause of her frailty she was not reckoned among the Popes."||

And whatever may be the objections urged by

\* Bayle, *Dict. Historique et Critique*, iii. p. 2569.

† *Vide* fourth vol. of the *Harleian Miscellany*.

‡ Leo Papa obeiit Kalend. Augusti; huie successit Joan mulier, an 2, mens 5, dieb. 4.

§ Platina's *Life of John VIII.*

|| Siegbert Gemblicensis in *Chro. ad ann. 854.*

some of the Romish zealots against the testimony of the afore-named writers, there is at least one author whose testimony must needs go unchallenged. We allude to the writings of Theodoric of Niem, who was the secretary of several successive Pontiffs, and created Bishop of Cambray. This ecclesiastic, from his lengthened connexion with the Vatican, may justly be supposed to have had access to the most ancient documents, and to the most authentic information ; nor could he be suspected of publishing to the world an incident so decidedly subversive of the whole Papal scheme, and yet his testimony as to the Pontificate of the female Pope is sufficiently distinct and explicit as to leave no loophole for controversialists to escape by.\* Besides, Dupin bears a high witness to the truthfulness and accuracy of this writer, stating that, “though his style was harsh, yet that he was faithful and exact in his relations.”†

By the side of Theodoric of Niem, we may place another witness, Cornelius Agrippa, the favourite of both Leo X. and Charles V., who appointed him as historiographer of the Empire, and who equally records the fact of Pope Joan's elevation to the chair of St Peter. Would he have dared to do this if any doubt existed?‡

\* *Theodoricus de Niem, Lib. de Privilegio et Juribus Imperii.*

† *Dupin, vol. xiii. p. 77.*

‡ “Atque inter Rom. Pontificis supra multos scismaticos et reprobos et etiam haereticos; aliquando etiam, mulierem ad tanti apicis culmen concendisse; quem vocata est Johannes VIII. rexitque sedem apostolicam laudata ab omnibus annos 2 cum aliquot

Platina, to whom repeated reference has been made, who, besides writing the Lives of the Popes, was also Papal secretary, and well affected towards the Holy See, gives the following information concerning Joan:—He tells us that “John, of English extraction, but born at Mayence, is said to have arrived at the Popedom by evil arts; for, disguising herself like a man, whereas she was a woman, she went, when young, with a learned man to Athens, and made such progress in learning, that few could equal, much less go beyond her, even in the knowledge of the Scriptures; and, by her learned and ingenious readings and disputations, she acquired so great respect and authority, that, upon the death of Leo, (as Martin says,) by common consent, she was chosen Pope in his room.” He now proceeds to enter into the particulars of her evil mode of life, and concludes by stating, that “this story is vulgarly told by some uncertain and obscure authors; therefore I have related it barely and in short, lest I should seem obstinate and pertinacious if I had omitted what is so generally talked of.”

We might greatly multiply the names of historians who all agree in bearing witness, with more or less minuteness, to the fact in question. It is certain, that, on several occasions, the misadventure of Pope

mensibus; et quod mulieribus in ecclesiâ negatum est, contulit sacros ordines—ceteraque Romanorum Pontificum exercuit munera, &c.”—*Cornelli Agrippæ de incertitudine et vanitate Scientiarum, cap. 62, de Sectis Monasticis.* Colon, 1584.

Joan was tacitly admitted by the Romish Church. Thus, at the Council of Constance, when John Huss was contesting the infallibility of the Papacy, and exclaiming “the Church has been imposed upon by the woman Agnes,” it is remarked by the historian of that Council, “if it had not been an incontestable fact, the Fathers of the Council would not have failed to rebuke the expression of Huss with indignation. Not only did John Huss allege the fact (of Pope Joan) in his interrogatories before the Council, but he referred to it repeatedly in his charges against the Church, without notice being taken of an allegation so scandalous.”\*

Such, then, is a portion of the body of evidence, which goes to prove and establish one of the most extraordinary events in the history of the Popes of Rome. What historical fact of ancient times comes down to us attested by evidence clearer and weightier than that of the adventure of Pope Joan? And if her history be true, what becomes of all the preposterous and fabulous claims of the Papacy? Where is the Infallibility—a woman, an impostor, the successor of St Peter, the Vicar of Christ! Talk as the Papists, the Mannings, the Denbighs, have lately done of blasphemy and sacrilege in speaking against the claims of the Pontiffs, and alienating the patrimony of St Peter, we may well retort the charge and declare that to be blasphemy and sacrilege which

\* Lenfant, *Histoire du Concile de Constance 4to, 1714, tom. i. lib. iii. p. 340.*

applies holy and divine ascriptions to human beings so depraved and abandoned.

And now, as we enter the tenth century, we meet likewise with many revolting instances of crime and guilt chargeable on the pretended successors of the Apostle Peter. We have before us the history of Pope John XII., and a painful history it proves in all its details. Even Baronius, the most zealous champion of the Papacy, is constrained to say of that Pontiff, that he was "a monster of iniquity,"\* and Bossuet writes of him thus: "Pope John XII. was deposed, on account of his crimes, by a Council of Italian and German Bishops."†

It appears that this Holy Father was placed in the chair of St Peter by his father Alberic, a Roman patrician, when he was but a boy of sixteen, without having been previously admitted into holy orders. He soon betrayed the wicked propensities of his character. Impatient of the check put upon his evil ways by Berenger II., who then ruled Italy, he looked for more freedom of action from another quarter; and called to his assistance the Emperor Otho the Great, whom he induced to invade Italy with a powerful army, and to whom he swore allegiance and dependence. Finding, however, after a short time, to his sore disappointment, that he had only changed masters; and that the present ruler was not more disposed to connive at his wickedness than the former,

\* Baronius, *Annales Eccl. ad Ann. 966.*

† Bossuet, *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle*, tom. i. p. 41.

he broke his oath of allegiance to the German Emperor, and made friends again with the House of Berenger. Otho was no sooner informed of the Pope's act of treason, than he returned to Rome, to take vengeance on the criminal. He assembled a Council of prelates, in whose presence he accused and led to the conviction, by a multitude of witnesses, of the Holy Father, of simony, perjury, murder, sacrilege, and blasphemy.

And here we may as well transcribe the letters which the Emperor addressed on this occasion to His Holiness Pope John XII. : "To the Sovereign Pontiff and Universal Pope—His Highness, John Otho, by the grace of God Emperor, in the name of the Lord sendeth greeting. Arrived in Rome, in the service of God, and having interrogated your children, the Romans, the Bishops, the Cardinals, the Priests, the Deacons, and the whole population, respecting the cause of your absence, and the motives which led you to avoid meeting us, we, the Defender of your Church and your person ; they have told us such things of you, things so shameful that, if found related by historians, those things would cause us to blush. And, in order that those transactions should not remain concealed from you, we will recapitulate some of them ; a whole day indeed would not suffice to enumerate them in detail. Know, then, that you are accused, not by a few persons, but by all, by those of your own order, as well as by the laity, of being guilty of murder, of perjury, of sacri-

lege, and of incest. To this accusation it is added, what is most horrible to hear, that at table you have drunk the health of the devil; and that at gaming you have invoked the help of Jupiter, Venus, and other demons. We call upon you to appear and purge yourself from those accusations. And if you stand in dread of the violence of the populace, we pledge our word and oath that nothing shall happen to infringe the rules of the holy canon-law."\*

The Holy Father was not disposed—why should he?—to comply with the Emperor's bidding; he put in no appearance; and, accordingly, the Council condemned and degraded him, appointing Leo VIII. in his stead. But the degraded Pontiff, John XII., was not the man to be so easily put down and crushed; he had resources and expedients of his own; nor would he scruple about trifles. No sooner had the Emperor quitted the Italian soil, than the Holy Father came forth from his hiding-place; and, gathering around him a number of retainers, he regained, by force of arms, possession of the chair of St Peter, having driven away the Pope installed by Otho. He now convened a Council of his personal friends, by whom all the penal enactments against him were cancelled and disannulled.

A third time the German Emperor marched at the head of his forces against Rome; but before he had approached the city, Nemesis had stricken the blow

\* Sismondi, *Histoire des Republiques Italiennes*, tom. i. chap. 3, p. 157, as taken from the historian Lituprandi, lib. vi.

on the criminal and degraded man. John fell by the hand of an outraged and dishonoured husband. "Le Pape"—we feel reluctant to express in English what the historian tells us of the end of that wicked man, we prefer to transcribe it in French, perhaps it may be more suitable to the French—"Le Pape surpris de nuit dans une rendez-vous de galanterie chez une femme mariée fut frappé à la tempe d'une coup dont il mourut peu des jours après; par les mains du Diable, nous dit l'Eveque de Cremona, mais plutot, sans doute, par celles du mari jaloux."\*

For upwards of nine years did this "monster of iniquity" preside over the affairs and interests of the "Holy Catholic Church," the reputed successor of the Apostle, the Vicar of Christ, the Father of the faithful! Can it be possible that the human mind should become so thoroughly depraved and perverted as to submit to the teaching of Romanism with such a revolting instance before us as that of the Head of the Church being convicted of the crimes of "murder, perjury, sacrilege, and incest"? Can wickedness be of a deeper dye? Can human depravity assume a darker, a more hideous complexion? Are we to suppose that those men, who from time to time meet together at St James's Hall or elsewhere, under the guidance of that vain and weak-minded man, Dr Manning, to express "sympathy with the

\* Sismondi, Hist. Républiques Italiennes, tom. i. chap. 3, p. 159.

Pope," have ever read the history of the Popes, the history of John XII., and others like him? And, if they have read that history, can they still, unblushingly, claim sympathy for the Pope, on the plea of what is continually being dinned in our ears, that the Holy Father, God's Vicegerent, the Vicar of Christ, the Supreme Sovereign and Pontiff, is in danger of being overcome by his enemies? But where is their warrant to show that the Pope is entitled to sympathy? it is because he is possessed of all the high-sounding dignities and honours which they claim for his person. But the history of ages past, with one loud and unceasing peal, testifies against all their vain and vapouring pretensions. With very few exceptions, those who, during so many centuries, have sat in the chair of St Peter, have proved to be of the most abandoned of mankind, chargeable with the most heinous offences to be found in the catalogue of human crime. To apply to such men the epithet of "His Holiness," "the Holy Father," "the Vicar of Christ," is more than a perversion of terms—it is blasphemy; it is blaspheming the name of the God-man; "What concord hath Christ with Belial?"

It may be quite true, that the present Pope, Pius IX., according to common and general report, is personally the very best of men, amiable and benevolent; but does he manifest the best disposition to relinquish, in this our day, the worst features of the Popes of the middle ages? When urged, as he has

been urged for many years past, by his supporter, the Emperor of the French, to adopt measures of conciliation, of such reforms as are demanded by the spirit and the necessities of the times, what is his language?—"non possumus," "Tu es Petrus"—we are "the Vicar of Christ;" is there not, in theory, a perpetuation of Hildebrand? What a whining there is set up, by the whole pack of the Ultramontanes, both in this country and in France, over the lost provinces of Umbria and the Marches, and the necessity of their restoration to the Holy Father, as though the salvation of the whole of Christendom depended on the possession, by the Pope, of these territories. It is sheer hypocrisy to say, that the temporal power is essential and indispensable to the exercise of the spiritual power. The world has heard this announcement very frequently of late, at public meetings in London, in Dublin, in the French Legislature, and most authoritatively from the lips of the infallible Vicar of Christ, at the Vatican. When, in the month of last December, the French officers of the expeditionary army took leave of the Pope, His Holiness said, "It is not by promptings of ambition that I am determined to preserve a kingdom of more or less extent; but the more I think of my situation, the more I remain convinced that the Temporal Power is necessary to me in order to exercise freely the spiritual power." Now, it may be esteemed a most ungracious, yea, a most unseemly act to give a direct contradiction to the utterance of the Holy Father,

the infallible Head of the Holy Catholic Church, nevertheless the interests of truth and soberness demand that we should show the utter fallacy of the Papal assertion. It has been remarked already in the foregoing pages, that St Peter bequeathed no "kingdom," no Temporal Power to his successors; and that One greater than St Peter clearly and unequivocally declared that "His kingdom was not of this world." And what are the lessons of history? The earlier Bishops of Rome, for several centuries, never so much as dreamt of the Temporal Power being essential to the wielding of the spiritual. Gregory I., on whom, from the peculiar political circumstances of the times, the Temporal Power was thrust, declared against it, as incompatible with the more sacred office and functions of a Christian Bishop. And to bring the question to a practical test; where can it be shown, that in a solitary instance the secular authority is absolutely necessary to give effect to spiritual duties and requirements? When the Holy Father issues a Bull, a Mandate, an Encyclical, or by whatever name you may call the expression of his will, is it requisite, to enforce obedience, to send out with the parchment a squadron of Papal Gens d'Armes, a regiment of French Zouaves, or a division of the Antibes Legion? Is it not the frequent boast of the Romanists—how often have we noticed Dr Manning chuckling over it!—that the Supreme Pontiff and Sovereign has two hundred millions of subjects scattered all over the earth? Well,

then, to secure allegiance, does he find it necessary to have a standing army in every corner of the globe? Are not the priests, equipped with no other but the spiritual power—are not they his veritable soldiers, armed with spiritual weapons, tyrannising over the wills and consciences of men—are not they slavishly obeyed by the deluded Romanists? Are not all the followers of the Papacy, both in this country as well as in Ireland, ready to bow down the neck in submission to any mandate of their Bishops and priests, without the aid of the secular arm? To say, then, that it arises from no promptings of ambition, but from a desire to give effect to the spiritual power, that Pius IX. holds the possession of the temporal rule necessary and indispensable, is, in plain English, sheer hypocrisy and a downright falsehood. Are the Romanists prepared to say that the spiritual functions of the Holy Father have been deteriorated, have lost in weight and influence, by the alienation of those provinces now incorporated with the Italian kingdom?—if not, and we are sure that no such admission will be allowed, to what else but to “the promptings of ambition” are we to ascribe the constant clamour which is being heard on every side for the restitution of those territories? Nay, it is nothing but the overweening pride, the towering ambition of the Supreme Sovereign Pontiff, which revolts against the loss of the triple crown, which, strangely enough, had adorned for so many ages the brows of the successors of the poor fisherman of Galilee.

We can hardly believe that public opinion in France will feel much sympathy in the language of the two Cardinals—Bonnechose and Donnet—expressed in a tone of insolent vehemence in the French Senate, to the effect that the spoliation of the Papal territory amounted to sacrilege, and calling upon the Government to aid in its restoration. Do these Ecclesiastics imagine that the world has forgotten the ways and means by which the Patrimony of St Peter, as it is called, has been acquired? There were better days in the Gallican Church, when her Bishops were not so utterly blinded by an abject and fanatical subjection to the Roman See. During the contention of the two rival Popes—the Roman and the Avignon Vicar of Christ—the Gallican Church held, in the year 1379, a Council at Paris, where it was agreed that the Bishops should withdraw their allegiance from both; thus affording the most open and undeniable proof that they could dispense with the Headship of the Supreme Pontiff. And, at a still earlier period in the history of that Church, in the darkest days of the middle ages, there were found in the south of France, Bishops who rose up in bold and open opposition to the Papacy. Agobard and Arnulph, two French prelates, denounced, in unsparing terms, the prevailing corruptions of the Roman See, striking at the very root of the Papal system. Agobard seems to have had clear views of the gospel, contending for the sole mediation of Christ and the Augustine doctrine of

grace. He declared against the worship of images, a practice he stigmatised as folly and sacrilege. Arnulph, on his part, denounced the reigning Popes as "monsters of iniquity," as the very Antichrist, "sitting in the temple of God." "Once," we are told, "we had our illustrious Leos, our Gregories the Great. The whole Church, it is true, was willing to submit to the control of such men, so superior to others in knowledge and piety, though the concession of this privilege was opposed by the African Bishops. But now shall it be decreed that to such men as the Popes of our time, monsters of iniquity, ignorant of divine and human learning, unnumbered servants of God, scattered through the world, distinguished by knowledge and piety, shall be compelled to submit? What, Reverend Fathers, do you think of him who, seated on his lofty throne, glitters in gold and purple? If destitute of love, and inflated only with knowledge, he is Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself that he is God." \* If such were the convictions, with regard to Rome, of earlier days, who will say that the Gallican Bishops and a fraction of the laity, as well as those nearer home, have benefited by the vaunted progress of the age, the advance of civilisation, and the enlightenment of the nineteenth century; when it is considered that Romanism is now, and ever will be, until violently shaken down and overthrown, the same anti-social system, the same antagonist to all

\* Act Syn. Rhem., c. 28.

freedom of thought and human progress, as in the days of old ?

But after this long digression, we must needs retrace our steps, and go back to our narrative of the career of some of the Holy Fathers. The last who occupied our attention was John XII. ; we place by the side of him Benedict IX. He too, like John, was but a boy, and consequently of uncanonical age, when elevated to the Pontificate ; and his character also was marked by the most shameless profligacy. "A historian assures us," we are told, "that when Benedict IX. was but ten years of age, the people's suffrage was purchased for him with a sum of gold. And Pope Victor III., who succeeded Benedict after an interval of forty years, writes : 'I feel a horror to repeat his mode of life—it was shameless, corrupt, and execrable.' After Benedict had, for a long course of time, scandalised the Roman population, by his acts of rapine and murders, the citizens being no longer able to bear his deeds of iniquity, they drove him from the city. As a last expedient, he sold for a very large sum of money the Papal dignity to a person named John, who adopted the title of Gregory VI."\* Indeed, it is not too much to say—though it is with sincere pain we record it—that the Popes who filled St Peter's chair, in the tenth and some of the following centuries, are a disgrace to human nature, and were guilty of the most atrocious acts of wickedness, such as are unfit to be mentioned. Baronius, one of the

\* Sismondi, tom. i. p. 17 ; Dupin, Compend., iii. p. 95.

most unscrupulous defenders of the Papacy, nevertheless acknowledges “that the Holy See was fallen under the dominion of two women of immoral character, who placed their favourites in St Peter’s chair, who were unworthy of the name of Roman Bishops.”\* Bossuet† writes “that the Popes drove each other alternately from the throne, while the infamous race of Marozier long usurped the Supreme See.”

The task is very far from being pleasant to dwell on the darker and more revolting shades of human character; and especially when the guilty parties are men placed in eminent stations of life; vested with sacred callings and functions, and set to be teachers and examples in religion and virtue to multitudes of their fellow-beings. And now, when we come to listen to the arrogant and inflated pretensions of the Romanists,—when we hear them talk of the Holy See, the Holy Father, the Holy Catholic (Romish) Church, out of the pale of which there is no salvation,

\* Of Boniface VII. Baronius writes thus (Annals, tom. x. ad ann. 985):—“Annumerandus inter famosos latrones et potentissimos grassatores atque patriæ proditores Scyllas et Catilinas horumque similes quo omnes superavit sacriligiis iste turpissimus,” &c.

Platina, in his Life of this Holy Father, tells us that he robbed St Peter’s Church, and meeting with some opposition in his wicked course, from a Deacon named John, he put out his eyes, and then (it is added by Dupin) starved him to death. Of another Supreme Pontiff—John X.—Baronius writes thus:—“Trespior nullus cuius sicut ingressus in Cathedranus Petri, infamamissimus ita et exodus nefandissimus.”—Tom. x. ann. 800. n. 3.

† Discours sur l’Histoire Universelle, tom. i. p. 29.

—when they are led to speak with the most consummate disdain and contempt of those who confess a purer and scriptural faith,—and along with this history marshals before us, in successive ages, a series of Supreme Pontiffs, of Holy Fathers, the very incarnation of wickedness, “monsters of iniquity,” whose deeds of evil cry for God’s vengeance,—shall we shrink from the contemplation, in order to demolish the impious claims, and to vindicate the cause of our Reformed Church? Can it be possible that the human mind should become so depraved by blind fanaticism as to regard the Pontiffs we have been describing as Vicars of Christ, as infallible Guides of the Holy Catholic Church, the Dispensers of spiritual gifts and blessings? It may be thought, perhaps, that we are exaggerating the portraiture of human wickedness as exhibited in the lives of many of the Popes during several centuries. Let us, however, refer, upon this point, to the writings of a candid Roman Catholic historian. Dupin, quoting the following testimony of a contemporary of those dark days, shows the frightfully corrupt condition to which the Church of Rome had been reduced. Arnold, Bishop of Orleans—not Dupanloup of Orleans—exclaimed, “O miserable Rome! thou that didst formerly hold out so many great and glorious luminaries to our ancestors, into what prodigious darkness art thou now fallen, which will render thee infamous to succeeding ages! ”\*

\* Dupin, *Opera*, vol. viii. p. 5.

Who is there to gainsay the resistless force of those remarks, if we had before us no other instance of Papal delinquency than that alone of Theodoric Borgia, who, as Alexander VI., occupied the chair of St Peter towards the end of the fifteenth century? The crimes and enormities of that miscreant have for ever rendered his name and memory infamous and execrable. His deeds of wickedness were such as to excite a shudder in every well-regulated mind; and we must needs, for the sake of decorum, cast a veil over them. By the unlimited sale of every piece of preferment at the Roman Court, the Pontiff amassed vast sums of money, which were all lavishly wasted in habits of dissipation and profligacy. And we are told—it would seem incredible if it were not attested by the witness of history—that, in order to replenish his exhausted resources, he conspired with his, if possible, more abandoned son, Cæsar, to destroy by poison the best endowed members of the Sacred College to traffic in the vacant benefices. The Cardinals were, accordingly, invited to a rich banquet, where the poison-cup was to circulate; but, guided by an unseen and superhuman hand, it was mysteriously placed before the poisoner, who, partaking of its contents, fell a victim to the violent death which he had intended for others.

“Theodoric Borgia,” so writes Dupin, “procured his own elevation in the room of Innocent VIII. by his canvassing, his money, and the promise he made to the Cardinals to give them benefices and lands,

and took upon him the name of Alexander VI. He disgraced his dignity by his ambition, his avarice, his cruelties, and his debaucheries, and died on the 18th of August 1503, having taken by mistake that poison which he had prepared for poisoning the Cardinals he had invited.\* Another Roman Catholic writer, of considerable celebrity, bears witness to the same intent. "Alexander VI. died," Bossuet tells us, "of poison, which he had prepared for the wealthiest Romans, of whose spoils his son expected to possess himself."†

For more than eleven years did this atrocious criminal administer the affairs and wield the powers of the Holy Catholic Church, impiously bearing the title of Vicar of Christ and successor of the Apostle Peter. Can we conceive aught more startling, more incongruous, more repugnant, more repulsive to the human mind? This the Church of Christ, whose Supreme Pontiffs are stained with the darkest blots of guilt and crime! Are we to trace in the history of such men the marks of the Church of God? Can the Most High deny or contradict Himself?

But, before we have done with this part of our subject, we have to survey—painful as is the task—the career of a few more of the Holy Fathers. Julius II., the successor of Theodoric Borgia, exchanged the sacerdotal vestments of the priest for the mailed coat of the soldier. Professedly the Vicar of Christ, he

\* Dupin, vol. xiii. p. 56.

† Bossuet, Discours, tom. ii. p. 54.

was really the worshipper of Mars. Instead of engaging in the ministry of peace, he delighted mostly in the tumults of war. His vocation was to follow the sound of the trumpet, to march at the head of armies, and to fight, not "the good fight of faith," but with the armour of sense and of the flesh, dealing out death and destruction. Can we recognise in him the successor of the Apostle Peter?—did he "feed the sheep of Christ"? was he an overseer of the household of faith? was he qualified, the man of war, to minister the gifts and endowments of the spirit of peace? Then away with the abhorrent pretensions and claims of the Holy See; they are invalidated by the uniform testimony of history, every page of which lifts a loud protest against Papal pride and ambition. Yet, notwithstanding all such flaws in the title-deeds of the Supreme Pontiffs, Pius V. felt no scruples, no hesitation, in proclaiming an anathema, an execration, upon all those who are not members of the Church of Rome. By his well-known Bull, *in Cœna Domini*—which, be it remarked, is yearly read in Rome on the festival of the Holy Sacrament—he consigns all heretics, without the possibility of escape, to the vengeance of eternal fire. Now, we are quite willing to allow that the vast body of the liberal Roman Catholics indignantly disown and reject so intolerant and impious a dogma of their Church; nevertheless, it is a fact that the Holy See still retains this article as part of its creed, and the sentence of malediction is annually hurled

against all dissentients from the Papal system by the authority of the Supreme and Infallible Pontiff.

And in what terms shall we speak, or rather does history testify, of Pope Paul III., who took such good care of his illegitimate progeny, who proved so good a *father*, that he made his sons members of the Sacred College, and surrounded himself with attached and devoted Princes of the Church. Another Pontiff, Julius III., was less choice in his appointments and surroundings. He nominated a menial, a poor boy, keeper of his favourite ape, to be one of the Cardinals, a member of the Sacred College. And when that body offered to His Holiness a forcible remonstrance against the unworthy and undignified appointment; reflecting reproach and discredit on all the members of the Sacred College, Julius coolly and impudently retorted by asking the Cardinals what particular merit or virtue they discovered in him when they elected him as Pope and Head of the Church.

The history of Pope Sixtus V. is one of the most remarkable in the annals of humankind; it partakes so much of the romantic character that it can hardly fail to be of interest to the reader.

The origin of this Pontiff—whose family name was Montaldo—was most humble and obscure. His early education was altogether neglected; and as he advanced in youth, he betrayed a natural thirst for learning. Meeting, one day, accidentally a friar of the order of St Francis, the shepherd boy, deeply interested by his conversation, was easily persuaded

to accompany him to his convent, which was at no great distance. The friar, discovering in Montaldo a strong desire of being instructed in the ordinary rudiments of knowledge, persuaded him to remain permanently in the monastery, and the parents being consulted, acquiesced in the proposal. As time wore on, and the mind of Felix Montaldo had attained a high degree of culture and learning, he became dissatisfied with his humble condition in the cloister—he sighed for a nobler, a more promising sphere to give scope to his aspiring and ambitious spirit. Accordingly he quitted the monastery and made his way to Rome. Here his advancement was most rapid; he rose from step to step until he became a member of the Sacred College, and speedily eclipsed, as Cardinal Montaldo, many who formerly frowned upon him as an obscure preaching friar. Nor was he satisfied with the elevation at which he had arrived; his haughty spirit spurred him onwards to a still higher dignity and power. His aim was now the tiara; he would stop at nothing short of the triple crown. But as it was usual to raise to the chair of St Peter only such members of the Sacred College as were either well stricken in age, or attainted with bodily infirmities, Montaldo had little or no prospect of success in his ambitious strivings, being still in the prime of life and of robust and vigorous health. But the Cardinal was a man of many expedients, and was not easily stopped by trifles in climbing the ladder of distinction. By a deep-laid scheme of dissimulation, he

gave himself the air of one who was rapidly declining in health, and whose constitution was so seriously undermined as to be breaking up. The change of his personal appearance gained for him the reputation of great saintliness; as though he practised great austerity and mortification of the flesh. Supported on crutches, he appeared daily at the Confessional, to which considerable crowds were constantly repairing to receive the benefit of absolution from so distinguished a saint. His utterance, on those occasions, was in a low tremulous voice, like that of a dying man. And when at length informed of the demise of the reigning Pontiff, he assumed the semblance of more than ordinary decrepitude and suffering; and tottering with feeble steps to the apartment of the Dean of the College, Farnese, who from his influence was likely to decide the approaching election, he requested—what he knew to be against the established rules to be granted—that he might be excused from attending the Conclave. When reminded by Farnese of the infallible rule, which could not be dispensed with; Montaldo declared that he could not conceive what advantage his presence in the Conclave would be, unless it were as a *memento mori*, that he attended as a dying man.

But the dying man played his part well. The hour of his triumph, but not the hour of his death, was at hand. The deception which the holy man practised was so far attended with success, that, according to usage with the Conclave to elect the most

aged or the most enfeebled as Vicar of Christ, Cardinal Montaldo was raised to the chair of St Peter ; the dignity for which he had sacrificed every principle of religion and morality.

No sooner was his elevation announced to him by Farnese, than his crutches dropped from his apparently palsied hands, he sat up erect, and lost, as by miracle, every mark and symptom of suffering or decrepitude. He seemed at once and in a moment transformed into a strong, vigorous, and youthful man. Surprised at this extraordinary and unexpected change in the condition of the man, who was supposed to be so thoroughly broken down as to be near his end ; it was attempted to annul the election by declaring that a mistake had been committed in the scrutiny. Their Eminences were startled from their propriety when they heard "the dying man" exclaim, in a voice of thunder, ringing through the sacred hall, "No mistake—a valid election—proceed with the usual ceremonials."

The Cardinals had thus been completely outwitted ; electing, as they believed, a "dying man" to be Pontiff, and hoping to rule at the Vatican, supreme, they found they had enthroned a stern and uncompromising master with an unbending and inflexible will. There can be but one opinion of the nefarious means employed by Sixtus V. to seat himself in the chair of St Peter. His cunning, trickery, and dissimulation go to prove—like many other instances of Papal history—the corruption of the Holy See, and

the misapplication of the terms of "Holy Father," "Vicar of Christ," and successor of St Peter, as claimed by the Bishops of Rome. Judging the character of Sixtus V. apart from the tortuous and immoral way by which he climbed to the Papal throne, it is but just to own that he was a man in advance of his day; that he set on foot a reform of the worst corruptions of the Church of Rome; and that, if his Pontificate had been of longer duration, he would have cleared away the darkest abuses of the Papal system. He was something of a statesman, whose mind was susceptible of enlightened impressions.\*

Sixtus V., notwithstanding the stigma which rested on his character, owing to the duplicity he practised in making himself master of the Pontifical tiara, may, nevertheless, be reckoned among the Popes of a questionable respectability. We have referred to the history of some of the more disreputable of the Holy Fathers, whose character was tarnished and stained with crimes of no ordinary turpitude. Nor are the darker and more distant ages of the Church chargeable with the production of such men; our own age has seen some of the worst successors of the Apostle Peter. The scandalous life of Leo XII., his amours and numerous offspring by Madame Pfiffer of Lucerne—and again that of Gregory XVI., his levity and frivolous amusements—as minutely described in a

\* See Rycaute's continuation of Platina's Lives of the Popes, p. 174; likewise Lord Clarendon's Religion and Policy, vol. ii. p. 446; and Mosheim, cent. 16, sect. 3, part 1.

recent work of a Roman Catholic writer,\* go to prove that the advancing civilisation and march of mind of the nineteenth century have had little or no effect in correcting the scandals of the pretended Vicars of Christ.

But we would now pass on to another line of historical proof, which serves to falsify that part of the Papal scheme, on which so much stress is laid, and to which so much of importance is attached, especially in the present day,—namely, that the possession of the city of Rome is essential and indispensable to the Papacy ; that the Holy See can exist nowhere except in the Eternal City, and that the bond of union is indissoluble. And yet we can point to a time, in the history of Romanism, when this spell, this pretended indissoluble association between the Papacy and the city of Rome, was broken and dissipated.

It was Philip the Fair, King of France, who first dislocated the Holy See from the Eternal City, and transplanted it within his own dominions. Philip was not disposed to submit to the imperious and arrogant pretensions of the successors of the lowly Galilean fisherman. He was of too independent and unbending a character to bear with the insolence of the haughty Roman Pontiffs ; and his repeated contests with some of the Popes ended in his removal of the seat of the Papacy from Rome to Avignon ; where it was more in his power to put an effectual check on the intrigues and ambition of those Italian

\* See *Question Romaine*, par M. Ed. About.

Prelates. As might be supposed, this removal was exceedingly mortifying and galling to the population of Rome, chiefly owing to the material or financial injury which was thereby inflicted on the inhabitants in general; and many efforts were made during the whole period of seventy years, while the Popes resided at Avignon, to bring about their return to their ancient seat. Every endeavour was in vain, until the accession of Gregory XI. to the Pontificate, in the year 1370, who resolutely insisted on setting up again the Papal throne in its ancient place. Gregory, it appears, was first moved to take this step by the pretended prophecy of a nun, Catherine of Sienna, who professed to be inspired, and to have received various Divine revelations expressing a direct command to the Pope to return to Rome; and conveying to him, at the same time, a distinct promise of a prolonged and prosperous life as a reward of his obedience to the heavenly message. But the Pope soon discovered that he had trusted in "lying vanities," for, shortly after his arrival in the Eternal City, his earthly career came to an end, his life was cut short, and the promise of the false prophetess failed and fell void to the ground. Nevertheless, in the face of this imposture, the Church of Rome has seen fit to canonise this Catherine of Sienna; and her prophecies, or Revelations, as they are termed, have been gathered into a book of Devotion, and is still in use among the more devout members of the Romish communion.

When on the death of Gregory the Conclave assembled as usual, to proceed with the election of a successor, a vast body of the Roman populace crowded around the Sacred College; vociferously demanding that an Italian Prelate be chosen, in order to prevent a second removal of the Papacy to Avignon. This popular demonstration quickened in a wonderful manner the ordinarily slow and hesitating proceedings of the Conclave; in a very short time it was announced to the expectant crowd, that Pergamo, a Neapolitan Bishop, had been raised to the chair of St Peter, who assumed the title of Urban VI. It was, however, soon discovered that the Cardinals, owing to the popular pressure put upon them, had mistaken their man. Urban, naturally of a haughty, overbearing temper, greatly offended and insulted the members of the Sacred College, who, to rid the Church of so unfit and unworthy a Pontiff, retired as a body to a city within the Neapolitan dominion; and proceeded to elect another Pope, in the person of the Count of Geneva, who assumed the title of Clement VII.

The boasted unity of the Church of Rome received thus a violent and irrecoverable blow; it was now, if not before, divided into two camps. There were now two distinct successors of St Peter, two Vicars of Christ. It became a very nice, but most difficult question to determine, which of the two was the rightful possessor of the succession, both having been alike lawfully elected by the Conclave. In the

contest between the two claimants, the nations of Europe took different parts. France, Spain, Scotland, and Sicily supported Clement, who fixed his seat at Avignon; while the other nations sided with his opponent at Rome. Each Pope claimed supremacy in the Church, so that the Holy Catholic Church could rejoice in being ruled by two Supreme Pontiffs, whose only point of agreement was, that what the one declared to be right, the other, with equal infallibility, declared to be wrong; Rome hurling anathemas at Avignon, and Avignon returning the compliment to Rome. At this distance of time, it is hardly possible to imagine the degree of scandal which was thus created, the state of disorder and confusion into which the Church was thrown, during the fifty years that this schism continued.

Dupin, whose writings we have so repeatedly quoted, describes thus the condition of the Christian Church: "These reciprocal condemnations," of the rival Pontiffs, "caused great disorder throughout all Christendom; each of the two having their partisans, who made war one upon another, and endeavoured to deprive each other of the benefices and dignities obtained of the Pope whom they acknowledged; insomuch that benefices were for a booty, and seized by such as found themselves the strongest. The Popes bestowed them on those that sued for them, though undeserving and even not of age to hold them, merely to enlarge the number of their creatures; or else they sold them to supply their

wants. Impiety reigned everywhere, there was no such thing as order and obedience, and the Church was in a dreadful confusion.”\*

A contemporary writer, Peter d’Ailli, Cardinal of Cambray, speaks thus of the general condition of the Church: “The Church had fallen into such a state, that she was not worthy to be ruled by any but reprobates.” Another historian writes thus: “The violence of cabal having taken the place of the ancient liberty of electing the Sovereign Pontiffs; this dignity was given to the man who could command the most devoted creatures of his own, and not to the man who had the most light and pastoral merits.”†

Several of the European Sovereigns, and foremost the Emperor and King of France, alive to all the evils arising out of the unseemly schism, especially the discredit it brought on the Church and the cause of religion, endeavoured, but in vain, to heal the breach thus occasioned by the contending Vicars of Christ. It was proposed, and most reasonably, that, for the sake of giving peace to the Church, both Pontiffs should retire and renounce their claims, leaving vacant the Chair of St Peter for a worthier successor, but both Holy Fathers refused their acquiescence. The Gallican Church, as afore-mentioned, withdrew their allegiance from both Popes; thus proving, that, in the estimation of those Pre-

\* Dupin, vol. xii., cent. 14, p. 36.

† Lenfant, tom. ii. p. 624.

lates, the Church could exist without a Supreme Sovereign Pontiff, whether at Avignon or at Rome.

It is true that, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the two rival Popes, Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII., entered into a solemn engagement, on oath, to renounce the Papal chair, and to restore peace and harmony in the Church; but both Pontiffs wantonly violated their pledge and oath. This scandalous outrage determined the majority of the Cardinals to convoke a General Council, which assembled at Pisa; and whose members proceeded formally to depose both Holy Fathers, after having convicted and pronounced them guilty of simony, heresy, and contumacy. This measure, however, tended only to create a worse state of things; for the Council having raised Alexander V. to the Papal dignity, there were now, instead of two, three reigning Supreme Sovereign Pontiffs. On the death of Alexander, the Cardinals elected a successor in the person of John XXIII., whom history describes as a man " destitute of all principle both of religion and probity," and he manifestly and speedily proved that this was a just and accurate portraiture of his character. He was constrained by the Emperor Sigismund, much against his own will, to assemble another General Council, which met at Constance, and whose proceedings are so memorable in the history of the Church of that period, in connexion with John Huss and Jerome of Prague. That assembly having decreed, as one of its first acts, that the Popes were subordinate and sub-

ject to General Councils, extorted from John, after considerable hesitation and delay, the promise, on oath, that he would renounce the Papacy—a promise which was likewise given by the other two Holy Fathers. John, however, was not very particular about breaking a promise or an oath; an example which his two colleagues were equally disposed to follow. Disguising himself in the garb of a postilion, he stealthily left the Council and the town, and immediately proceeded to anathematise the whole of the acts of that Assembly.

Dupin gives a fearful summary of the crimes proved against that Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Catholic Church, a title which the Romish Church arrogantly applies to herself. “Simony,” so writes Dupin, “especially in buying the Cardinalate—his tyranny (and other crimes too shameful to mention) while he was Legate at Bononia; his poisoning Alexander V. and his own physician; his open contempt of the Divine offices after he was Pope; his denying justice, and oppressing the poor; his public sale of benefices and ecclesiastical dignities; and a thousand cheats committed in such transactions; selling Bulls, Dispensations, and other spiritual graces; his wasting the Patrimony of the Church; and, lastly, his breaking the oath and promise he made to resign the Pontificate. At the end of each article, the number and quality of the witnesses that proved it was expressed; and a remark was made from time to time of the advice that had been

given him to amend, notwithstanding which he still continued in the same disorders."\*

No wonder that the Council degraded a criminal—though a Supreme Pontiff—like this man; a fate which was shared by Benedict XIII., while Gregory XII. was wise enough to resign his dignity in time to escape a sentence of deposition. The Cardinals, in Conclave assembled, now raised to the Pontifical office a member of their own body, Odon Colonna, who took the title of Martin V. This ended the schism and the strife, the breach of the boasted unity of the Holy Catholic Church, which had lasted for so considerable a time.

But here, we propose to bring to a close our historical inquiry; believing that sufficient, authentic, and indisputable evidence has been produced, to make good the assertion, at the very outset of our investigation, to the effect, that Romanism is a gigantic imposture; notwithstanding all its inflated pretensions and numerical strength. Nothing is more common, in the present day, in order to puff up the Papal power, and to elevate the Pope, than to hear from the Romanists that the Head of their Church holds two hundred millions of human beings in subjection. We have been told of this of late in the French Legislature, and as re-echoed by good Dr Manning. But may not the followers of Mohammed claim, on the same ground, homage and subjection to their false Prophet; their numbers being equally

\* Dupin, vol. xiii., cent. 15, p. 17.

great, if not greater? It is not a question of numbers which can determine the truth or falsehood of this or that religious system; if it were so, we should have to decide in favour of heathenism, of idolatry, since the bulk of humankind are heathens. But if it be allowed that the Bible alone and exclusively, is the standard on which the truth of the Christian religion is to be tried and tested; then are we bound and constrained to pronounce the Romish system a tissue of the most barefaced and subtle falsehood. The whole system confessedly rests on the power of the Keys, on the claim that the Bishops of Rome, being successors of St Peter, are endowed with supreme rule in the Church,—Vicars of Christ,—God's representatives on earth,—and, as such, infallible, and commanding implicit obedience and submission. But where—in the name of common sense and common honesty—we ask, do we find in the New Testament the remotest hint of such supreme power being transferred to the Bishops of Rome, in virtue of being the successors of the Apostle Peter? Even if it were allowed—that which cannot be proved historically—that St Peter was Bishop of Rome, can it be shown that he laid claim, that he set up pretensions to supremacy in the Church? Was this Apostle ever designated, whether by himself or by others, the "Holy Father, the Supreme, Sovereign Pontiff"? Did he ever aspire to temporal rule—to set himself above "the Powers that be, which are ordained of God," or to hold in subjection,

and to trample upon the Kings and Princes of the earth ? If these attributes and prerogatives did not pertain to the Apostle Peter, then we have to conclude that they who claim those attributes and prerogatives, in virtue of their being the Apostle's successors, are no better than the most arrant impostors.

Besides, the uniform witness of history is most decidedly against those claims. Some of the earlier Popes, as we have shown, took part with the heretics of their days ; openly and deliberately rejected the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and disowned Christ as the Redeemer of mankind. Are those Pontiffs to be passed off as the Vicars of Christ —they who were His declared enemies, who crucified Him afresh, and held Him up to open shame ? Then again we find the witness of history testifying to a number of Popes who proved the very incarnation of evil, "monsters of iniquity," miscreants of the darkest complexion. Are we to be persuaded that those men are to be regarded as the representatives of Him who, while walking our earth, was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" ? Are they the Holy Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church of Rome, out of whose pale there is no salvation for sinners ? To believe this, we might as well be persuaded that sin and holiness, vice and virtue, were convertible terms. The fundamental basis of all religion is the obligation of obedience to the law of moral truth, as well as a refusal to uphold and believe in a falsehood or a contradiction ; and who can deny that, if the

Church of Rome be tried on this test, the verdict must go against her, inasmuch as her entire religious system is grounded on a falsehood, and in contradiction to moral truth. Even though we were to shut up our Bible, and take for our guide merely the moral instinct of our nature, we should feel, and have to declare, that a Church pretending to be the only true Church of God on the earth, and its Head the representative of Deity, and yet sunken in the deepest state of corruption, and withal breathing a spirit of sanguinary persecution against all opponents, bears on the very face, branded on the forehead, the marks of falsehood and imposture. We feel well-nigh the blood running cold when we read of the sufferings of the early Christians, the inhuman cruelties inflicted by the Pagan Emperors of Rome, the Neros, Caligulas, and Domitians; but these are trifling in comparison with the wholesale massacre and slaughter of scores of thousands of Christians in cold blood, at the instigation of the Holy Fathers, the pretended Vicars of the Prince of Peace. Where shall we find a parallel in the annals of mankind to the treacherous and cold-blooded butchery of St. Bartholomew; the sufferings of the Huguenots; the refined cruelties committed upon the Waldenses, the Bohemian and Moravian martyrs, and the confessors of the Netherlands? But who, we may be told, would rake up those dark deeds of a dark and by-gone age, in this enlightened nineteenth century, but a bigot and fanatic. Yet who can venture to say that

the Papacy has laid aside, has abandoned its persecuting spirit—that it is not now what it was—that it would not do now what it did in former times, if its power were still the same? In the present Pope's most recent Allocutions is there not still a mumbling of curses and menaces against all, Sovereigns and peoples, who are not content to bow beneath the Papal yoke? In the Allocution pronounced by Pius IX, at the Consistory held on the 20th September 1867, His Holiness expresses himself as follows, in reference to the disposal of the ecclesiastical endowments by the Italian Government:—“This same Sub-Alpine government, oppressing and daily exciting itself more and more to abuse the Church, after the other laws it has put forth, and we have condemned, as opposed to the authority of the Church; has at last come to that degree of injustice, that it has had the sacrilegious audacity to propose, approve, sanction, and promulgate a law which, in its own territories as well as in those it has usurped, has despoiled the Church of all her property, to the great injury of civil society—has appropriated that property, and ordered its sale. All people assuredly must see how unjust, how cruel, is a law which attacks the inviolable right of property the Church holds from her Divine origin; which tramples under foot all rights, natural, divine, and human; and by which, lastly, the members of the clergy, who have deserved so well of Catholicism and civil society, and also virgins consecrated to God, are reduced to the extremest misery and beggary.”

"In such distress of the Church, in presence of such a subversion of all her rights, we, who are bound by the obligations of our apostolic ministry to defend and avenge with the utmost zeal the cause of justice, assuredly cannot preserve silence. For this reason we uplift our voice in this imposing assembly, and rebuke with our apostolic authority the law in question. We condemn it, we declare it null and without any value. Let its authors and abettors know that they have placed themselves beneath the ban, and the ecclesiastical penalties and censures, which the sacred canons, the apostolic constitutions, the decrees of the general Councils declare inflicted *ipso facto* upon violators of the rights of the Church and usurpers of her property. Let these enemies of the Church tremble and be filled with fear. Let them be certainly convinced that God, the originator and the avenger of His Church, reserves for them the heaviest, the most severe chastisement, unless, truly repenting and retracing their steps, they hasten and put an end to and repair the injuries inflicted by them upon this very Church; and we ardently desire and ask humbly with all our strength from the God of mercy."

Now, may we not discover in all this scolding and cursing a ring of the good olden times of the Hildebrands—Oh, if we could but strike as well as threaten! And what may be the mortal sin which is laid to the charge of those Catholic Christians? are they charged with heresy or schism, or with any sin or breach of

a spiritual or moral law? No, no! the whole of their crime lies in relieving the community of a vast number of ignorant, idle, and lazy monks and friars—not to forget the “virgins dedicated to the service of God,”—who were fattening and thriving on the labours and industry of the people at large. So that after all the Holy Father’s anger and his overflowing zeal in behalf of the prosperity of the Church, may be reduced to a very common and vulgar measure, that of pounds, shillings, and pence. But let us notice what a Roman Catholic writer, in a Paris paper of great respectability and influence—the *Journal des Débats* of October 1, 1867—has to say in commenting on the above Papal Allocution.

“The Sovereign Pontiff,” remarks the writer, “directs attention to the fact that he has already condemned several laws voted by the Italian Parliament; and, continuing to interfere in the political acts of the Government of Florence; he declares to be null and void the late measure relating to the liquidation of the ecclesiastical property. This is almost equal to declaring, that the subjects of Victor Emmanuel are released from their oath of obedience; strictly speaking, it may be said to be the same thing. In fact, from the moment in which the Pope can declare to be void a law regularly voted by the Parliament, the faithful may on their side believe themselves not bound to respect it. The Allocution leaves to them the task of drawing that inference, which is arrived at naturally without any great effort

of the mind. Europe, therefore, presents the singular spectacle of a Government publishing laws voted by a National Assembly, freely elected, and which, in consequence, are obligatory on all citizens ; and of a foreign Government saying to those subjects that the laws in question are of no value, and must be considered as not existing. That is no doubt what at Rome is called teaching respect for the principle of authority. What will appear not less singular is, that the Pontifical Allocution was delivered almost at the same moment in which the Italian Government, faithful to the Convention by which it engaged to prevent any attempt from without against the Roman States, ordered the arrest of Garibaldi, at the risk of alienating, by that necessary but painful measure, the affections of a part of the population. Thus, while the Italian Government is watching the Pontifical frontier, and assuring the tranquillity of the Roman States, the Court of Rome is launching forth its anathemas, and teaching the Italians that they are oppressed by 'sacrilegious men,' who make a sport of trampling under foot all rights divine and human. Those sacrilegious oppressors are, as has just been seen, the same who only yesterday delayed the fall of the temporal power by arresting Garibaldi. That such a situation is so strange and abnormal, that one is disposed to ask how, being so improbable, it can really exist ? "

We may, perhaps, wonder that a Paris print should be allowed to establish against the Vicar of Christ a

charge so serious and so damaging as that of his open incentive and encouragement to sedition and rebellion ; to stimulate an excitable and impulsive people to the subversion of lawful authority, and disobedience to the powers that be. The French Emperor has of late become wonderfully enamoured of the Papacy, of the *benefit* which the world derives from its existence, and the consequent necessity of its support ; and, therefore, it may be a matter of surprise that he, who is not renowned for being over-liberal towards the public press, should have suffered such an accusation to be raised, under his own eye, against his *protégé*, the Supreme Sovereign Pontiff, by a paper like the *Journal des Debats*, whose weight and influence throughout Europe is so well known.

And now, let us listen for a little while to another and more lengthened Allocution which this pretended Vicar of Him who is "meek and lowly," and of whom it is said "a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench," addressed to a secret Consistory after the defeat of the Garibaldians at Monte Rotondo. This "Father of two hundred millions of Christians"—this "Head of the whole spiritual world"—as Dr Manning is pleased to designate his idol the Pope—this old man with all the sacred offices and functions ascribed to him, is given to deal largely in invectives, and to be far from choice in his language, like any other ordinary mortal. After talking a while "of the goodness which God deigned to lavish upon us in the midst of the most serious

calamities which, in these iniquitous times, have befallen the Church"—the humble successor of the Apostle Peter goes on to say, "whilst Satan, his satellites, and his sons, do not cease to maintain their fury in the most horrible manner against our Divine religion, against us, and against the Church of St Peter, to worry and annoy the population of most unhappy Italy, so long devoted to us, the God of mercy and goodness reveals Himself to His Church in the most ostensible and admirable manner, He hastens to its assistance, and grants it with a liberal hand the support of His all-powerful virtue." The Holy Father then proceeds at great length to lavish his ghostly praises and benedictions on those noble-minded men of the whole Catholic world, who, "imitating the illustrious example of the Maccabees, felt glorious and happy at shedding their blood in such a cause." Next follows special mention of "the most august, most powerful Emperor of the noble and generous French nation, considering the serious dangers that surrounded us, sent his valiant soldiers, who, as well as their distinguished commanders, with extreme zeal and ardour—especially in the combats of Mentana and Monte Rotondo—rejoiced to come to the aid of our men, to fight courageously in their ranks, and brave death for this Holy See; thus covering their name with glory." Having thus praised God for the victory gained over "Satan, his satellites, and his sons," with the sword and the bullet, and the consequent effusion of blood,

“the Head of the whole spiritual world,” goes on to praise God for the success of the “holy missions shedding their light more brightly every day, giving our most holy religion a more increased development among those who were sitting in darkness and beneath the shadow of death. All these facts—which we barely allude to—those multifold means of the impious, which are discovered and destroyed in the most astonishing manner, clearly indicate to us how the almighty and merciful God, in whose hands are the hearts of men, protects and defends His Church in the most wonderful manner; how He wishes to give us the most convincing proof that never will the gates of hell prevail against it, and that He is always by our side to the end of all generations.”

Will it then be unfair to ask, that, if God’s Vicegerent be honestly persuaded that the Almighty is always on his side, and no earthly or any other power shall be able to prevail against the Church over which he presides, what on earth does he want with Antibes Legions, Papal Zouaves, and French Chassepot guns? Is it at all compatible with the character—and reconcilable with the mere instinct of our nature to think—of him, who ostensibly represents the God of peace and of mercy, to give countenance to, if not to originate, warfare and the butchery in cold blood of thousands of men, and to proffer his thanks to those who have been engaged in the work of slaughter? And for what object, to what end, is all this clashing of arms, this holocaust of human beings? Is religion

in danger? are Satan, his satellites and his sons, let loose, to burn churches, to overthrow altars, to banish the name of the Deity, and to establish the worship of reason, or universal infidelity? No, it is the Temporal Sovereignty which is in jeopardy; the Supreme Pontiff declares that he must be King as well as Priest; and in support of which dignity thousands may be slain in battle, and innumerable families bereaved and impoverished. Nevertheless, the pious and faithful adherents of the Pope in this country mustered very numerously at St James's Hall "to express their sympathy for the Holy Father," at the time when he had been fighting for the maintenance of the Temporal Power. All the speakers at the meeting, the titular Archbishop of Westminster, the Earl of Denbigh, and other Roman Catholic notabilities, in their expression of sympathy made no reference to any attack being made or contemplated on the person, authority, or dignity of the Holy Father, but on his Temporal Power. "Pius IX.," said the Bishop of Southwark at that meeting, "cannot be a Pope unless he be also a King; without a Sovereignty there can be no independence." We will here join issue with the Bishop, and examine history as a witness, whether the Temporal Sovereignty is a necessary and an essential appendage to the office of the Pope; and whether it has ever been so from the day when the first Pope succeeded to the chair vacated by St Peter, who certainly never wore a crown, even though he had ever been Bishop of Rome.

Our first witness is one of no mean authority in the Church of Rome, the Abbé Döllinger, who is the Chief of the Royal Chapter, and Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Munich, in Bavaria. In an article on the Papacy, published not very long since, the Abbé writes thus : 1. "The Papacy was seven hundred years without possessing any territory, and again seven hundred and five years without having the possession of the States of the Church guaranteed ; and it is only for the last three hundred years that the possession has been assured. The present governmental system, which is an inheritance of French dominion, is only forty-five years old. 2. It is admitted and proved by history, that the possession of a territory and the temporal power are not indispensable to the liberty and independence of the Chief of the Church. 3. Public opinion in Italy declared in time past, and still more strongly in our days, against the maintenance of the States of the Church, for the reason, that it regards that as the principal obstacle to the realisation of the idea of having Italy a united, great, and powerful nation. 4. In the Pope's own territory, a numerous party has for thirty or forty years past been endeavouring to undermine the throne, and even at the moment when it was attacked, no part of the population gave him the slightest testimony of sympathy or attachment. 5. For several centuries, secularisation, that is to say, the tendency to separate the temporal power from spiritual things, has been manifested

everywhere, and has triumphed in all Europe, with the exception of the States of the Church."

And if this be so—and history incontestably proves it to be so—then what becomes of the outcry which is raised on every side, from the Tiber to the Thames, that the temporal power is indispensable to the spiritual jurisdiction. Supposing this were admitted, and at the same time it is historically proved, that for seven hundred years the Church of Rome was possessed of no such power; it inevitably follows, that for the same length of time her spiritual jurisdiction or supremacy was wanting in its essential point, was, in fact, powerless; what becomes, then, of all the noise and clatter of primacy and supremacy, if for seven hundred years the Church was crippled, like the dry bones in the prophet's valley of vision? Was it for the first time that the Church of Rome sprang into her full power and authority when, in the year 756, Pepin le Bref endowed the Pope with the Romagna, as a reward for having sanctioned the King's usurpation? To this foul and discreditable transaction, then, we have to trace the foundation of the Pope's temporal as well as spiritual power, the one being indispensable to the other, and so both have their origin in an act of usurpation; and, moreover, this territory of the Romagna, which was thus bequeathed to the Papacy, is ordinarily passed off as Peter's Patrimony; we can hardly imagine why such a designation should ever have been adopted. A patrimony, in plain, simple language, is an estate or property which a

son inherits from his father; but, surely, we know of no such inheritance having fallen to the share of St Peter from his father, who, we may assume, was a poor fisherman, and had nothing to bequeath but a boat and a net. It is, therefore, somewhat puzzling how it comes to pass that an Italian province, acquired by the Papacy by a title so disgraceful, should be known as the Patrimony of St Peter. Rome, we are constantly told, is not an Italian, but a Catholic city; it is the metropolis of the Catholic world, and sacred ground; Satan, his satellites, and his sons are to be kept outside of its precincts. But can this point be established on historical data? It can hardly be maintained, honestly, that Rome, under the Papacy, ever possessed, for any length of time, the rank of a capital city, of a free and independent sovereignty, or that the temporal power is better than a fiction. We refer, upon this point, to the following historical sketch furnished by an Italian paper of recent date:—

“The 29th of October 1867 witnessed, for the fifteenth time during this century, the intervention of a French army in Italy, at the demand of the Sovereign Pontiff. Machiavelli observed that the Popes had always been the principal obstacles to the unification of Italy. Themselves alien in Italy, they called foreign armies to their assistance every time they thought that the temporal power was endangered. That does not prevent to accuse the Italians to be ungrateful to the Pope.”

" The following is the historical index of the foreign interventions called in Italy by the Pope, since the beginning of the temporal power. In the year 734 the French, led by Charles Martel, entered Italy at the request of Gregory III. In 756 the French again marched into Italy, with Pepin, at the call of Stephen II. In 776 the French, under Charlemagne, appeared in Italy, for the third time, at the request of Adrian. Three years later, in 779, the same Charlemagne restored Pope Leo III. In 872 another French intervention in Italy took place, under the lead of Charles the Bold, at the solicitation of John VIII. In 877 the same Pope called again the French to his assistance. In 879 the Pope called in the Greeks, commanded by the Emperor Basil. In 891 the Emperor Arnolph sent a German army to the aid of Pope Formosa. In 894 the same Emperor, at the cry of the same Pope, sent another German army. In 956 John XII. again requested a German intervention under the Emperor Otho. In 964 the same Pope applied a second time for the assistance of the same Emperor. In 967 the same Emperor is called upon for the third time to intervene, and this time in behalf of John XIII. In 985 another German Emperor, Otho III., entered Italy at the request of Gregory IV. In 997 took place a second intervention; by the same Emperor, at the entreaty of the same Pope. In 1013 Henry II., Emperor of Germany, intervened in Italy at the instance of Benedict VII. In 1060 Pope Nicholas II. called the Normans

to his assistance. In 1084 Guichard, Duke of Normandy, was called to aid Pope Gregory VI. In 1130 Lothario II. intervened in behalf of Innocent II. In 1137 the second intervention of the same German Emperor, at the request of the same Pope. In 1152 Frederick Barbarossa was called to help Pope Eugene II. In 1261 the French, led by the Duke of Anjou, intervened in Italy at the request of Urban II. In 1272 Rodolph, Emperor of Germany, was called to the assistance of Nicholas III. In 1309, again the French, commanded by Charles of Valois, entered Italy at the request of Boniface VIII. In 1320 the Austrians entered Italy at the solicitation of John XXII. In 1351 Innocent VI. called for the aid of Charles IV., Emperor of Germany. In 1386 Louis of Hungary was called to intervene in behalf of Urban VI. In 1411 Pope John XXIII. called upon Sigismund, Emperor of Germany, to help him. In 1469 Sixtus IV. requested the assistance of the Turks against Venice. In 1487 Charles VIII. of France was called on by Innocent VIII. In 1499, under the reign of Louis XII., a French army entered Italy at the request of Alexander VI. In the year 1500 the same Pope called for the intervention of the Spaniards, under Ferdinand the Catholic. In 1506 the same Pope called in again the French; and again in 1511 the same Pope called for the combined assistance of the English and the Spaniards. In 1520 Charles V., Emperor of Germany, sent an army into Italy at the solicitation of Leo X. In 1521 the same

Pope requested the assistance of the Emperor of Germany, of Henry VIII. of England, and of Ferdinand, Emperor of Austria. In 1525 Clement VII. called on the Emperor of Germany, Charles V., for aid.

“ And now to come down to more modern times, we find that in 1831 both the Austrians and the French entered Italy at the request of Gregory XVI. In 1849 the French, the Austrians, and the Spaniards, intervened at the solicitation of the present Pope, Pius IX. In 1860 the same Pope again called for more assistance, and in the autumn of the last year a renewed French intervention was demanded. Thus it appears from the preceding sketch, that the Popes have requested the French intervention sixteen times, the German intervention fifteen times, the Austrian intervention seven times, the Spanish intervention three times, the English intervention twice; the intervention of the Greeks, of the Normans, the Hungarians, and the Turks, once respectively.”

With this historical panorama passing before us, may it not excite our surprise, if not indignation, to hear it constantly asserted by the rabid ultramontane party, that the Papacy is the most ancient of all European Sovereignties, that the Pontiff has ever been an independent and supreme Sovereign, and that his independence is essential and indispensable to his spiritual office and functions! All this was impudently, and in the face of all history and all truth, advanced at the meeting held at St James’s Hall, to which reference has been made before. The

resolutions which were passed at that meeting declared, "that the Temporal Sovereignty of the Pope was providentially established, and had been beneficially exercised by successive Pontiffs; that it was not adverse, but most conducive to, the peace, prosperity, and greatness of Italy; that the aggressions of Victor Emmanuel merited reprobation; that it was the sacred duty of Sovereigns to protect the independence of the Pope, and that duty has been violated by Her Majesty's Government, even in the speech from the throne; and that the aid and encouragement given by the English press, English members of Parliament, and political associations, to the antipapal revolutionary movements in Italy, called for indignant condemnation; that the faith and chivalry of France was to be applauded; and that, in order to assist the Pope and maintain order in his States, an annual collection of Peter's Pence shall be made in the several parishes of the diocese of Westminster."

It is hard to realise the fact that a number of English gentlemen, lay and clerical, of education and high social position, should deliberately pledge themselves to a string of resolutions, to each of which not only the testimony of history, but our observation also gives a flat contradiction. To talk about the "providential establishment of the Temporal Power," when all the world knows the trickery, the tortuous and iniquitous means by which it was at first acquired, and has ever since been fictitiously and as a mere shadow maintained by the guns and bayonets

of the European Powers. Besides, it is assumed, that the world has forgotten the words of the greatest and best of all Roman Bishops, Gregory I., who declared that the Pope who aspires to the possession of the temporal power is Antichrist! Thus far, then, the assumption of the Temporal Power may be providential, that the Pope affixes upon himself the character of Antichrist, and leaves us in no doubt in the matter.

But we are told next by those good and pious Catholics, in the most grave and solemn asseveration, that the temporal power of the Papacy "has mostly conduced to the peace, greatness, and prosperity of Italy." What an astonishing announcement! It is hardly borne out by the testimony of one whom all the world regards as the greatest and wisest of living statesmen, one who has all of a sudden—it would seem by miracle—become the Pope's best friend and potent protector, and whom His Holiness acclaims as "the most august and powerful Emperor of the noble and generous French nation." Let us notice what were the opinions and expressed convictions of Napoleon III. at different periods of his marvellous career. In 1831 Louis Napoleon and his brother had joined a band of insurgents who were marching on Rome, when Gregory XVI. was Pope, to subvert —what Garibaldi has repeatedly attempted—the temporal power of the Sovereign Pontiff. At Terni, he addressed the following epistle to Gregory. ". . . M. will acquaint your Holiness with the real state of things here. He told me that your Holiness has

heard with sorrow our arrival in the midst of those who have rebelled against the authority of the Court of Rome. The inhabitants of Romagna especially are thirsting for freedom. They arrive at Terni to-night, and I must do them the justice of saying that, among the cries which they raise, not a voice is heard against the head of our religion, thanks to the leaders, who are in every case most highly esteemed men of their district ; and who take every opportunity of showing that their attachment to their religion equals their love for their temporal independence. What they are determined on is, that the temporal and spiritual power shall be divided. What I state is the exact truth. I swear it, and I request your Holiness to believe that I am wholly devoid of ambition. (*Je supplie Votre Sainteté de croire que je n'ai aucune ambition.*) I can also state that I have heard all the young men declare, that if Gregory gave up the Temporal Power, they will adore him ; that they will themselves become the warmest supporters of true religion, purified by a great Pope, and which is based on the most liberal book in existence —the Divine Gospel."

This epistle is signed "Louis Napoleon Bonaparte," and who on his solemn oath affirmed, nearly forty years ago, that the Italian people not only regarded not the Temporal Power as "conducive to the peace, greatness, and prosperity of Italy," but as actually injurious and obstructive to the best interests of their religion. But we may be told that

we are dealing with a bygone generation ; that, in this progressive age, the state of things has become changed and improved, and that the Louis Napoleon Bonaparte of the days of Gregory XVI., then a wild fiery youth, now thinks differently and better of the Papacy and its influence. Let us give heed, then, to the more recent opinions of the Emperor of the French.

Napoleon III. wrote, on the 20th of May 1862, to the late M. Thouvenel, as ambassador at Rome, to the following effect : " If the Holy See has zealous supporters among all fervent Catholics, it has against it all that is liberal in Europe. It is considered in politics the representative of the prejudices of the ancient *régime*, and in the eyes of Italy, as the enemy of her independence, and the most devoted partisan of reaction. Thus, it is surrounded by the highest adherents of fallen dynasties ; and that fact is not calculated to increase the sympathies of the people who overthrew those dynasties. This state of things, however, is less harmful to the Sovereign than to the Chief of the Church. In Catholic countries where new ideas have great influence, men the most attached to their belief feel their consciences troubled, and doubt enters their mind ; they find themselves unable to make their political conviction and their religious principles agree ; the latter appearing to them to condemn all modern civilisation. If this dangerous state of things continues political dissension is liable to bring about a painful rupture in religious faith."

May we not justly ask whether this State paper, penned by the wisest living statesman, and the "Eldest Son of the Church," gives any countenance or support to the declamations of the rabid Roman Catholics, who want to make the world to believe, not only that the Temporal Power is indispensable to the Pope's spiritual office, but that it is a blessing also to the Italian people? Nor does this document stand by itself as an isolated rebuke of the Papacy, by the head of the French Government: it is well known that, for some years past, the Emperor of the French has been using his potent influence by frequent persuasions and reasoning to move the Pope to a sense of moderation; to abate his untenable pretensions; to bring his Government into harmony with the progressive spirit of the age, and to come to an understanding with the Italian Court. But every effort proved in vain and abortive; the Pontifical Cabinet obstinately refused every approach to concession; and, on the 18th of January 1862, the French Ambassador at Rome wrote to his Government that he could never get any other reply from the Papal Minister than the *antea restituendum*. After the September Convention of 1864, the Pope published on the 8th of December of that year an Encyclical of the most violent invective that was ever published to the world—an invective not only against modern society, but against all free institutions, the civil power, and the rights of man. The French Government protested immediately and most

sternly against so inflammatory a rescript, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed it out to Europe as an attack on all the principles that constitute the basis of social order. It was regarded as a loud encouragement to sedition and rebellion.

It would seem, then, that others, besides Garibaldi, may be charged with seditious and revolutionary propaganda. Nevertheless, it has come to pass, that Napoleon III., the boasted champion of law and order, the steady opponent of the misrule and the anti-social government of the Papal Court, has all of a sudden turned round; has become blinded to the overwhelming corruption of the Papacy; and has sent an expeditionary army, in the face of liberal France and liberal Europe, to sustain *per fas aut nefas*, that wretched and condemned system. No blunder, not even the Mexican, comes up to and equals this, in incapacity and infatuation. Who can for a moment suppose, that a French army, equipped though it be with the Chassepot gun, will be able, for any length of time, to hold its ground against a united nation, numbering twenty-five millions, resolved to be possessed of Rome as its capital city, and to overthrow the Temporal Power of the Pope. The defeat at Mentana has in nowise discouraged the Italian people. "Who," thus asked Signor Mari, late Minister of Justice, in the Chambers, after that disaster—"Who is there who does not cherish in his heart the grand object of going to Rome? What Italian, who knows aught

of the history of his native land, is not aware that the Church of Rome has been to it a constant source of misfortune and evil? Who is ignorant that the Temporal Power of the Pope—a confusion and medley of politics and religion—is destined to fall, and must inevitably perish? Who does not remember the old Italian tradition, that the Church of Rome, by confounding two distinct powers, falls into the mud, and befouls both itself and its load?"

The above passage was received with the most tumultuous applause by the whole Chamber; and it finds an echo in every part of the civilised world, barring and excepting the clerical and ultramontane bigots. Is it not most remarkable that even the Austrians, the most quiet, if not stolid, priest-ridden people, have lately risen against the intolerable tyranny of the Church of Rome? The citizens of Vienna recently illuminated, extemporaneously, their habitations, and broke out in demonstrations of joy, to celebrate the breaking down of the priestly government. This feeling of resistance grows in extent and intensity all over Europe—of course, Ireland only excepted. And does Louis Napoleon, in his heart, really believe—considering the wisdom which is ascribed to him—that he will be able to support and perpetuate, by his legions, so monstrous and iniquitous a system as Romanism? No; Romanism is doomed—doomed of God, and doomed of man. The finger of doom is upon it. There shall yet be heard in our earth the shout,

“ Babylon, the Mystery of Iniquity, is fallen—is fallen,” never, never to rise again.

But if Romanism can be proved historically to be a gigantic imposture, what estimate shall we form of its counterfeit as exhibited in the Reformed Church of England? A counterfeit is always despicable; yea, it is felonious to manufacture and to utter counterfeit or base coin. Ritualism, as it is called, but more properly, Popery in disguise, is no better than a counterfeit or base coin. The testimony of history is rejected, the authority of law is set aside; while the mere setting up of the term “Catholic” is the only sure evidence of truth by the Ritualists. They wear the livery, the vestments of the Church of Rome, and teach all her unfounded and superstitious doctrines; being all the while pledged, solemnly and sacredly, to the Thirty-nine Articles and formularies of the Church of England, which they deride and trample under foot. Is this honest, is this manly, is this creditable? Would such proceedings be allowed in the ordinary walks of life, among merchants, or in the army or navy? Would not a merchant be disgraced and mistrusted, if he violated his word and promise? Would not an officer be cashiered, if he but once broke the articles of war? And is it not a public scandal to see ministers of religion, sworn to uphold a certain order, discipline, and form of doctrine of the Church, to be habitually employed, not only to denounce and to subvert all these, but to adopt a totally antagon-

istic and radically false system? We know how useless it is, considering all that has been so ably said and written on the subject of late, to attempt to turn those misguided men from the evil of their ways. It is to be hoped that the Guardians of the Church will no longer waste their efforts in bringing those men to account, by declamations in Convocation, or at public meetings, or in the soft language uttered in Charges to the clergy; but by legislative means. If the actual laws are insufficient to thrust Popery out of the Church of England, let there be new laws enacted to effect that end. There is still sufficient Protestant feeling in both Houses of Parliament to compass such an object. And if the renegades threaten to leave and go over to Rome, this were better than that they should remain in the Church of England, eating her bread, betraying her best interests, and building a bridge for their followers to join the Romish communion.

THE END.

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